



## **BESSARABIA**

# BESSARABIA

RUSSIA AND ROUMANIA  
ON THE BLACK SEA

BY  
CHARLES UPSON CLARK

AUTHOR OF "GREATER ROUMANIA"

*ILLUSTRATED*



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## PREFACE

In my "Greater Roumania" I devoted a chapter to Bessarabia, but felt that any extended study was hopeless for the moment. Every post-war problem has been clouded by propaganda, and a veritable fog of it has lain over these rolling plains by the Black Sea. Now it has begun to lift, and the student at last has access to some genuine documents, and to several years of the new administration.

Bessarabia is one of those border provinces which broke away from the Russian body politic and established separate governments. Finland, Lithuania, Esthonia, Latvia, Poland, Galicia, Bessarabia, now constitute a great Russian *irredenta*. The Bolsheviks, who in the beginning championed self-determination for smaller nationalities, seem now to have adopted the traditional Russian policy, particularly of expansion toward Constantinople and possession of the Straits. Bessarabia was annexed over a century ago, as a step in that direction. If an imperialist policy prevails in Moscow, recovery of Bessarabia must be a cardinal aim of Soviet effort. It behooves us then to come to know the diverse elements of



the Bessarabian problem, if we are to follow with intelligence the course of events in contemporary Europe.

This book has grown out of my endeavors to collect material useful for my lectures on the historical backgrounds of European problems. Nowhere could I find any comprehensive and reasonably impartial discussion of Bessarabia. I ploughed through thousands of pages of Roumanian and Russian books and pamphlets, and paid two extended visits to the province, the latter (in 1925) including automobile trips of several hundred miles. The accumulated material seemed to me of sufficient general interest and value to be submitted to the public. Every historical student will appreciate the difficulty of the task. Material is still scanty for some periods and aspects of the problem, abundant for others; thus the treatment is bound to be unequal. Nor is it possible to achieve impartiality; my sympathies are strong for the inarticulate Bessarabian peasant, a sturdy representative of the Roumanian race, against bureaucracies and exploiters, Russian or Roumanian; but I have tried to give a just presentation of all essential factors involved.

It has not been possible to reach consistency in the transcription of Bessarabian proper names.

Some, like Kishineff and Akkerman, seem thoroughly Anglicized, and I have held to them, rather than try to domesticate Chishinău and Cetatea Albă. Russian names I have in general Anglicized, like Urusoff; but where (as with so many in Bessarabia) they are now Roumanized, I have usually kept the new Roumanian spelling, substituting sh for ș and tz (or ts) for ț; I would refer to Chapter XXIV of "Greater Roumania," repeating here that ă = u in but; â and î = approximately i in in; ci = ch (Bercovici = Berkovitch), and c before e and i = ch, g before e and i = j, as in Italian. I have used "province" for the Russian "gubernia," and "county" for the Russian "oblast'," Roumanian "judetz." It must be borne in mind that dates prior to 1920 (and perhaps some since then; verification has often been impossible) are Old Style.

I must thank the Roumanian Government, and in particular M. Ion Duca, the then Foreign Minister, and the gentlemen enumerated before the Bibliography, together with many others, for every possible aid and facilitation in my travels and researches. In Bessarabia itself, I was most kindly treated by Gen. Rudeano, then in command, and by a host of Bessarabians. Dr. P. Cazacu, now of Jassy but formerly of the Bessarabian Diet, has given me several rare Russian

and Roumanian books and pamphlets; I have found his book the safest guide through the vicissitudes of Bessarabian history. I feel indebted also to Prof. Nistor, and to many others whom it would be invidious to mention. I am grateful also to various Russian refugees in Paris and London, who helped me secure rare Russian publications which I have utilized. I have no doubt that these gentlemen, whether Russian or Roumanian, will disagree with my statements and my deductions; but I hope they, and my readers in general, will find evidence of careful study, and a constant effort to present both sides.

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**BESSARABIA**

## CHAPTER I

### THE PRAIRIES

If we imagine Nebraska transported bodily, climate and all, and set down on the Gulf of Mexico, between the Mississippi and the Alabama Rivers, we shall have some idea of the appearance and the relative location of Bessarabia, with its frontage on the Black Sea, between the Danube and the Dniester. If we further visualize a welter of nationalities all about, of different languages and religions, who have trekked and warred over this tract of land since the beginnings of history, we can in some measure conceive what Bessarabia's fate has been through the centuries. It lay directly in the path of the great migrations of Scythians, Goths, Vandals, Slavs, Huns, Bulgars, and Tartars—to name only the most important of the tribes who have plundered its prairies; rarely has it long enjoyed a settled government. To this day it keeps a frontier air. An American from one of our western wheat or plains states, driving over dirt roads across the Bessarabian steppes, feels perfectly at home, until a group of picturesque wind-mills, indication

of the village hidden in the wide coulée below, recalls to him that he is in a foreign land. And how foreign, he soon learns. I have driven out from a Bessarabian city, largely Jewish and Roumanian; within an hour listened to a French Protestant pastor addressing his flock, descendants of Swiss settlers; in another hour, discussed crop prospects with Germans; then stopped in a village partly Bulgarian, partly Russian; and then attended the laying of the corner-stone of a school in a purely Russian village. In other excursions, I have passed for hours through districts solidly Roumanian; and up in the north I have been in villages partly Ukrainian, partly Polish. Bessarabia, like most European bones of contention, is a synthesis of her own history; nor can we understand her present problems without a glance at that history.

Bessarabia is a country of rich rolling plains, with good natural boundaries—the Danube, the Black Sea, the Dniester and the Pruth. It comprises about 16,000 square miles—less than Vermont and New Hampshire together; but its population, some 2,800,000, is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times as great. It lacks the mountains which frame the landscape in the other Roumanian provinces; but in the northern part we have the last out-runners of the sub-Carpathian hills, so characteristic of the rest of

Moldavia and of the Bucovina. They fade away into the Podolian Plateau, part of which is made Bessarabian by the winding course of the Dniester, and becomes the so-called Moldavian Plateau. This slopes off toward the south, its rolling hills and deep coulées gradually disappearing, until it merges into the level plain of the Budjak along the Black Sea, as flat as the Red River Valley.

Some of the northern and central hills reach a height of 1500 feet: a few are strikingly pyramidal in shape, but most have been carved into highly irregular form, and drop off almost precipitously into the water-courses. One of the great surprises of the traveler in Bessarabia is the terrific gradients which his automobile has to negotiate every few miles, in a country which he at first judges to be gently rolling prairie. The foundation of these hills is the Sarmatian calcareous and argillaceous rocks which underlie all this region, and they run in general from the northwest to the southeast; but there is one range which starts in Moldavia, at the Keys of Bârlad, rises near Jassy into Mt. Repedea, crosses the Pruth in a northeasterly direction, and reaches respectable elevations in the heights of Magura, the Byk Forest (Codru Bâcului), and the hills south of the lakes into which the Râut empties. In the county of Baltz and the western part of Orhei,

there is a deep depression in the plateau, the Middle Pruth region, into which the steppe vegetation of the Budjak runs far to the northward.

There are only two water-courses of any importance in Bessarabia, the Dniester, which forms its eastern boundary, and the Pruth, which separated it from the rest of Moldavia under the Russian régime. The Dniester is navigable, at least for barges, for its entire Bessarabian course; but although mixed Russian-Roumanian Boundary Commissions have held sessions every few weeks the past three years,<sup>1</sup> it has not yet been possible to agree upon traffic regulations, and navigation is still suspended—a great drawback both for Bessarabia and the new Moldavian Soviet Republic. The Pruth is gradually recovering its former usefulness; under the Russians much grain went down the Pruth to the Danube. Along the Black Sea we find the same “slews” and lakes which are so characteristic of our own western prairies; some are altogether detached, while some connect with the Dniester or the sea; and all are full of fish, which constitute one of the chief resources of southern Bessarabia. Malaria is a plague throughout this swampy region. But Bessarabia is not inherently an unhealthy country. Typhus, which was a scourge during the war, is now of

<sup>1</sup> See p. 273.



rare occurrence; it is of interest to record that a Bessarabian scholar, Dr. N. Petroff of Bender (Tighina), first succeeded in isolating the typhus germ, as he demonstrated before the Jassy Medical Society on Nov. 14, 1926.

The northern part of Bessarabia was already rising from the sea in Silurian times; the Cretaceous deposits which lie on top consist of more or less disintegrated sandstone, with occasional banks of chalk or marl with fossils like *Belemnites mucronata*. The Moldavian Plateau is of the Sarmatian formation, with lamellibranch fossils; above come Mæotian and then Pontic deposits, the latter with fossil remains of elephants. Over all lies the loess; and since the quaternary glaciers did not extend so far south, and the sea ran far inland, we find salt deposits nearly 50 miles from the coast. The loess in turn is covered by the famous *cernozem*—the black earth (*chornaya zemlya*) of the Ukraine, a vegetable deposit as rich as the Illinois or Alabama black lands. This grows clayey up around Hotin; and as one goes south, this black earth thins out, and changes into the chestnut or red earth characteristic of the Budjak, and much like that of Virginia and the Carolinas.

Bessarabia has two climatic areas, that of the coast and of the interior. We have temperature

records for Kishineff covering half a century; the average is almost exactly the same as for Vienna and Geneva— $9.65^{\circ}$  C. ( $=$  just under  $50^{\circ}$  F). December is the coldest month, with average temperature of just under  $35^{\circ}$  F.; July the hottest, averaging  $71^{\circ}$ , and sometimes reaching  $110^{\circ}$  in the shade. Bessarabians are apt to say that they have only two seasons, winter and summer; and it is true that the average for May is about  $12^{\circ}$  higher than for April. The first killing frost comes about the middle of October. The year averages 102 days with frost;  $-22^{\circ}$  F. has been recorded in Kishineff. The average number of rainy days is 96 a year, May and June reaching 11 each, and September falling to 5.7, the lowest; but one can hardly speak of an average, the seasons vary so enormously.

Droughts, especially in the south, are frequent; there was a bad one in 1921, and in 1922 the crop of Indian corn was a partial failure; the drought of 1924 was so serious that 1,750,000 acres of grain failed of a crop, with a loss of over a billion lei, according to the official statement of the Kishineff Statistical Bureau, under date of June 20, 1925. The year 1925 opened well, and when I was there in March, all were hopeful; but a still severer drought set in, and even the corn crop

was a failure. The Ministry voted a credit of 200,000,000 lei to be expended in grain for the relief of Bessarabia, and in October 1925, an additional credit of 60,000,000 was assigned for the same purpose. Up to Oct. 13, 11,000 car-loads (of ten tons each) of Indian corn had been sent into Bessarabia and sold through the coöperatives and popular banks, which were empowered to take the peasants' notes in payment; and over 500 carloads a month were used until the next harvest. In 1926, an abundant wheat crop was ruined by bad weather at harvesting time; but Indian corn was not affected, and gave a record crop—13,591,892 quintals, averaging nearly 17 quintals to the hectare (area in corn, 805,156 hectares). It was calculated that Roumania would have 26,767 carloads available for export. It will be remembered what devastation was produced by these same droughts in Southern Russia. Here also the comparison holds with such states as Nebraska and Kansas, where droughts influence political and social conditions, as well as business. Most of the political restlessness of Bessarabia would have disappeared, had it not been for the droughts of 1924 and 1925. Kishineff has an average rain-fall of about 22 inches, half that of New York or Seattle; this decreases to

about 16, as one approaches the Black Sea. The conditions, therefore, are never so favorable for wheat as in northwestern Europe or Pennsylvania, and the average yield per acre is about the same as in Nebraska.

This low yield is due also to factors not climatic. The small peasant holdings, due to the cutting-up of the big estates, do not permit of the use of machinery as in our own West; the peasants are poor, and agricultural education is backward; and the grade of wheat has deteriorated the past few years. Matters have been complicated by the export-tax levied by the Roumanian Government on wheat, following some years of price-fixing at a lower level than the world price. All Eastern Europe is at present a grand laboratory for the study of mistaken economic policies. When the Roumanian Government, in its effort to provide the consumer with cheap bread, fixed a low price for wheat, the farmer, finding that other grains were not regulated, dropped growing wheat and put his land into barley and corn. Then the government left the price of wheat alone, but clapped on a heavy export tax; the fall in the price of wheat in 1925 ruined several great wheat traders in Roumania, and it was not till late in 1925 that the govern-

ment lowered the export tax to a reasonable figure, thus allowing Roumanian wheat to compete again in the world's market. We may be thankful that our Constitution forbids export taxes!

## CHAPTER II

### BESSARABIAN PRODUCTS

As late as 1860, much of Bessarabia was waste or grazing land; only 1,210,000 desyatins of land (a desyatin = 2.7 acres) were under cultivation; by 1881, this had grown to 1,671,000, and in 1909 it reached 2,319,700. About  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the entire area is arable, and  $\frac{5}{8}$  is in cereals. The figures for recent years follow (in hectares, each of 2.47 acres, and car-loads of ten metric tons each):

	Cultivated area	Yield of grain in car-loads
1911	2,481,446	256,495
1912	2,594,632	222,480
1913	2,859,854	245,973
1914	3,154,211	207,247
1918	2,218,535	41,465
1919	2,157,653	194,325
1920	2,026,804	177,143
1921	2,326,206	148,240
1922	2,561,661	269,058
1923	2,554,973	255,916
1924	2,655,879	125,274

1925	2,495,628	85,805
1926	2,199,489	271,294 <sup>1</sup>

Indian corn is the chief grain; corn meal mush, the famous "mamaliga," is the national dish of the Roumanian peasant, as it was of the American Indian and the early New Englanders. Wheat runs corn a close second; barley has always been extensively cultivated; rye has been yielding to oats in recent years. Some tobacco is grown; under the Bessarabian Moldavian Republic, thirteen small government tobacco manufactories were established. Cotton has been experimented with recently, but without much success. Sunflowers are widely grown for their seeds, and there is increasing cultivation of alfalfa and other forage crops. Cole-seed (for colza oil) is also an important crop.

Bessarabia's chief value, in Russian eyes, lay in her vineyards; she produced half the total amount of Russian wine. Grape-vines cover 100,000 hectares in Bessarabia. Table grapes grow to perfection; in the late fall of 1919, I bought a bunch on the street in Kishineff which recalled the Vale of Eshkol; it was over a foot in length. Bessarabian wines are famous; the Cristi vineyards at Romaneshti supplied the

<sup>1</sup> Wheat, 51,590; rye 8,779; barley 63,392; oats 11,614; corn (incomplete) 135,919.

Czar's table, and are now Roumanian Crown Domain; they have the oldest Bessarabian grape-vine nursery. This lies in Orhei County; so does the Bucovatz-Călărăshi vineyard and nursery. Near Kishineff is Costiugeni, with its wines; there are two schools of viticulture, in Kishineff and in Saharna (Soroca Co.). Other well-known centers are the French-Swiss vineyards of Saba, near Akkerman; the Cavallioti vineyards at Silimon, Tziganca and Viltosu (Cahul); those of M. Efremov at Leontievo (Bender), M. Silos at Saseni and Pauleshti, Dr. Tumarkin and M. Capitanopulos near Kishineff; M. Terentiev at Purcari (Akkerman), M. Sinadino at Viscautzi (Kishineff), M. Eremeieff at Akkerman, M. Mimi at Bolboca (Bender), and many others; the Reidel Co. manufactures tartaric acid at Kishineff. There was an excellent exhibition of these wine-growers in the Kishineff Exposition of 1925.

The average annual production of wine is about five million decaliters. Unfortunately the growers were hard hit by the droughts of 1924 (production only two million) and 1925; and the economic dislocation of the new frontiers still presses severely upon them. These wines depended upon the Russian market, now closed to them, and that of Poland, where French wines have a





tariff preference; while in Roumania itself they have to meet the competition of the Tokay and other wines produced in Transylvania. Abroad, there is overproduction also, due to the disappearance of the United States market and other factors; so that the Bessarabian wine-grower faces a dubious prospect. In August 1926, however, there was held a joint Polish-Roumanian convention, arranging for the import of Bessarabian fruit into Poland, in return for the purchase of railway material from Poland. Wine brandy may have to meet the government prohibition scheme, which proposes to cut down the production a quarter every three years, so that after a dozen years the "tzuica" which every farmer distils from his plums would be the only hard liquor left in Roumania; it would be illegal to sell even that. The legislation of August 1926, regulating the transitional period, increased the taxation on strong drink, and restricted the number of saloons to one to every 150 families; it facilitated the opening of restaurants selling wine and beer with meals, in place of saloons. As in the Province of Quebec, the discouragement of strong liquor is aiding the sale of wine.

Bessarabia is also an excellent fruit country; about 100,000 acres are under fruit. In the old days, about 1400 car-loads of fruit (10 tons each)

were exported every year to the great Russian centers; the average quantities of the different fruits were: of apples, about 2,400,000 lbs.; walnuts, 9,400,000 lbs.; pears, 600,000; peaches, 5,300,000; plums and prunes, 3,100,000; grapes, 10,000,000. Some success has been achieved in finding markets in Austria and Germany; 180 ten-ton carloads of prunes were exported in 1925, at a price running from 95,000 to 122,000 lei per carload (\$485-610), according to quality, and about 250 carloads of walnuts, at 270,000 (\$1350). The 1926 walnut crop was abundant and high-priced; nuts sold as high as 300,000 lei (\$1600) the carload, and Călărăshi (Orhei), center of the trade, was a busy spot. With improvement in transportation and the lowering of tariff barriers, the Bessarabian fruit-grower will prosper; the country is a veritable California.

TABLE OF TREES

Plums .....	3,260,248
Apples .....	556,222
Pears .....	194,253
Cherries .....	1,031,765
Peaches and apricots .....	314,398
Walnuts .....	403,156
Other fruit-trees .....	189,679
	<hr/> 5,949,721

Like our own Plains States, Bessarabia passed during the nineteenth century from grazing to agriculture; and now there is a tendency in the other direction. The Bessarabian peasant does not use oxen as much as other Roumanians; there are about 250 per 1000 of population in Bessarabia, as against 350 in Old Roumania; but the proportion of horses is higher—165 and 105 respectively—although Bessarabia stood very low among the Russian provinces in this respect. The Roumanian was primarily a shepherd; during the Middle Ages it was the shepherd who kept the language and traditions intact; and there are to-day 50% more sheep in Bessarabia than in 1914, under Russian rule. The same proportion holds with horses and swine; Dr. Evans sees in this a sequel of the great increase in peasant proprietorship. I sub-join totals of the domestic animals (in thousands):

	1893	1919	1922	1925
Horses	345	403	435	388
Cattle	792	655	765	663
Swine	380	346	508	445
Sheep	1628	1594	2297	2143

The figures of 1925 reflect the two-year drought, which forced many farmers to sell or butcher their stock, for lack of forage.

There are besides a few thousand water-buffalo, and a few hundred donkeys and mules. Goats also are relatively scarce. Poultry-raising offers many inducements, and many eggs are exported to Germany. In 1910, the official Russian figures gave over two million domestic fowl, over 425,000 geese, 340,000 ducks and about 100,000 turkeys. At the Kishineff Exposition of 1925, there were exhibited excellent Black Minorcas, White Wyandottes, Buff Orpingtons, Barred Plymouth Rocks, etc. Bessarabian wax and honey have been famous for centuries; and the government is promoting silk-culture, on the lines followed in the Banat.

The Bessarabian hills were once heavily forested; but reckless exploitation under the Russian régime left the country almost treeless, and the war completed the devastation, since no other fuel was available. Today, only about 7% of the area of Bessarabia is in woods, and much of this consists of scrub-oak. The Roumanian Forestry Dep't has set to work to improve conditions, with Transylvania as a model. The districts of Kishineff, Orhei, and Hotin have about 20% of their area under forest; Akkerman, only 2 %. As a result of the scarcity of wood and the high freight rates for coal, I find in the Kishineff correspondence of the Bucharest financial journal, *Argus*,

under date of Nov. 19, 1926, the complaint so familiar in our own prairie states—that with wood selling at 22 lei (12 ¢) the pood (36 lbs.), and corn selling at 14, it pays to burn corn for fuel.

Bessarabian lakes and rivers, and the Black Sea along its coast, are full of fish, particularly sturgeon (whose roe, the caviar, is in great demand), carp, pike, pike-perch, herring, etc. Fishing is under government supervision, and is capable of much development.

### CHAPTER III

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The Russians never encouraged industry in Bessarabia; but efforts are now being made to establish woollen-mills and canneries, the raw material for both of which abounds in the country. The largest industry, employing perhaps 5000 workmen, is that of the flour-mills; but there are only a score of modern establishments; less than a hundred use steam-power, some 700 have water-wheels, 300 are driven by horses; there are nearly 5000 wind-mills, groups of which nestle on the edges of the hills overhanging the villages. The Roumanian tobacco monopoly has built a large manufactory in Kishineff; there is one sugar-mill, at Zarojani (Hotin), which utilizes the beets of that region; and when one catalogues a few saw-mills, furniture factories, tanneries, soap-works, brick-yards, breweries and distilleries, one exhausts the industrial achievement of the province up to date; the size of the establishments is shown by the Russian figures of 1910, which listed 6941 industrial concerns, employing on an average 1.2 workmen apiece! There are

still many craftsmen in the villages—potters, weavers, rug-makers, wheelwrights and the like—with eight or ten trade-schools serving their needs for apprentices.

But the worst legacy of Russian rule, after the astounding illiteracy, is the lack of means of communication. Here Bessarabia is precisely in the condition of our western prairie states before the coming of the automobile. My automobile expeditions in Bessarabia brought back to me prairie shooting-trips in Dakota 35 years ago; dirt roads or trails stretch across country, sometimes plowed completely through by some ambitious farmer, and often paralleled (as in Macedonia) on either side by tracks worn when the main road is impassable with mud; indeed, just as it was in Dakota, if you don't like the road, you turn in on the prairie itself. In fact, in the muddy season the Bessarabian peasant habitually takes the hind wheels off his farm wagon, shortens it up and lets the main pole which connects the axles, drag in the mud.

The Russians built only four paved roads in all Bessarabia—13 miles from Kishineff to Hancshti, 50 miles from Kishineff to Orhei, with a branch to Criuleni, 7 miles from Kishineff to Vorniceni and Nisporeni, and about 20 miles from Nouă-Sulitza (Czernowitz) to Hotin. During the



war, stretches were built also of the roads connecting Bârlad, Zorleni and Basarabeasca, and from Baltz to Ungheni. The Roumanian engineers are working on a project for about 1200 miles of paved highway connecting Kishineff with the main centers, and these latter with the nearest points on the Moldavian highway system. There is to be one north and south highway from Hotin to Ismail via Kishineff; another along the Dniester; a transversal from Jassy in Moldavia through Kishineff to Bender; three running east from the Moldavian centers of Dorohoi, Botoshani and Jassy; one from Copaceni to Sorocea, and from Glodeni via Baltz to Floreshti; three in the south connecting Cahul, Bolgrad, Ismail and Galatz; two in the north connecting Baltz and Sorocea with Orhei and thus with Kishineff; one in the south beside the lakes, from Akkerman to Bolgrad; one from Akkerman to Bender; one along the Pruth; and various connecting highways; 700 miles are classed as "urgent." It is hoped to finish this project within five years, with an expenditure of a billion lei; that is based on an approximate expenditure of 400,000-800,000 lei per kilometer; but in the south, where hard rock and gravel have to be brought in from great distances, I was told by competent authorities that it costs about a million lei per kilometer (about \$7500 a mile). The ap-

appropriation for Bessarabian highways in the 1925 budget was 150,000,000 lei; but the distress into which the country was plunged by the terrible crop failure of 1925, coming after the drought of 1924, led to much emergency work, and the program is being speeded up, particularly between Orhei and Baltz, Bolgrad—Ismail, Bolgrad—Reni and Soroca—Baltz. Within a few years, Bessarabia will be as well provided with highways as the other Roumanian provinces.

The Russians discouraged the building of highway bridges across the Pruth, and in 1918 the Roumanians found only a few inefficient bridges of boats. Their highway engineers at once determined on the construction of ten bridges, at Cuzlău, Lipcani, Sherpenitza, Bădrăgi, Shtefăneshti-Branishte, Bădărăi-Moara Domnească, Tzutzora, Sărata, Bumbăla-Leova, Târg-Fălciu and Cahul-Oancea. Of these, four are already finished—those at Cuzlău, Lipcani, Sărata, and Târg-Fălciu. Roumania is just on the verge of the automobile epoch; although the country is  $\frac{1}{4}$  as large as California, it possesses only about 20,000 automobiles, half of which are in or about Bucharest. The highways and bridges, even in Bessarabia, will usher in this epoch, not follow in its train, as they did in our West, which Roumania so much resembles.

The railway situation in Bessarabia in 1918 was especially difficult. In the first place, railway mileage was pitifully inadequate—only 1060 kilometers (= 657 miles); in the second place, the main lines converged on Russia, and were broad gauge; and finally, both rolling stock and right of way were in bad shape. There were about 400 locomotives, less than a hundred being fit for use; 290 passenger coaches, plus 33 more out of repair; and out of 4530 freight cars and 187 tank cars, only 1389 and 103 were usable. The first task of the Roumanians was to reduce the gauge to normal—4 ft. 8½ in.—so that through cars could be run to the rest of Europe. My first trip to Bessarabia, in 1919, fell in the midst of this process; the old Russian equipment was still in use; then a third rail was laid, so that normal gauge cars and engines could also use the lines; now, all is standard gauge, except for an English narrow gauge line, the status of which has been in the courts for some time; through sleepers run from Kishineff to Czernowitz and to Bucharest.

A glance at the map will show that the few railroads in Bessarabia were designed to connect the province with Russian centers, and for strategic purposes. The Roumanians are now working on new lines, to connect Bessarabian centers with each other, to provide important towns now iso-



MAP OF BESSARABIA

lated, like Orhei, with railway service, and to connect the interior with the sea and with Moldavia. One important line, that from Kishineff south to Sacaidac (Sahaidac), on the road from Bender (Tighina) to the Danube, is now finished; this eliminates the long detour over to Bender, dangerous also on account of possible Russian raids over the border.

Before the war, a Russian company provided water transport on the Pruth, Dniester and Danube, with some 25 or 30 tugs and motor-boats, and quite a fleet of barges; they carried some 16,000 car-loads annually, mainly grain. Commerce is picking up again on the Pruth and Danube, but the Dniester remains closed, pending an arrangement with Soviet Russia.

Business in Bessarabia is almost altogether in Jewish hands; of 242 registered manufacturers, two were Poles, three Bulgarians, four Greeks, fifteen Roumanians, eighteen Russians, and 197 Jews. Wholesale and retail business and money-lending are also mainly in their hands. When Kishineff was still Russian, pogroms occasionally took place; one of the older residents of Jassy told me they always knew in the old days when a pogrom was about to occur, by the influx of Jews from Kishineff. Since the Russian Revolution, there has been a constant Jewish immigration

from the Ukraine into Bessarabia. While Roumania has never devised a quota system so as to keep out Jewish immigration, this inrush has been in the highest degree embarrassing these last few years, particularly in Bessarabia, where business conditions were bad; in Baltz, e. g., the population has risen from 22,000 in 1922, to over 50,000 in 1926, the increment being almost entirely Hebrew. Nevertheless these incoming Ukrainian Jews were given circulation permits, with which they could move about Roumania like natives, and obtain passports for abroad. It is calculated that over 60,000 entered Roumania and are now resident there. I had occasion in 1919, 1921 and 1925 to admire the relief and educational work done in Kishineff and other centers for these Jews, by Hebrew relief organizations and the Roumanian Government; I was impressed, at a service on March 21, 1925, in the chief synagogue at Kishineff, to hear a patriotic address by the chief rabbi, expressing their gratitude to the government; the whole congregation joined heartily in the Roumanian national anthem. Lawless elements in Roumania, with large help from outside, have fomented anti-Semitic feeling the past two years; such incidents as those of Teleneshti (in June 1926) have received wide publicity; but that this feeling is not deep is shown by the testi-

mony given by Morris Gest, quoted in the New York *Times* of August 14, 1921—"There (i. e., in Kishineff) he did not find the discrimination which before the war had existed against the Jew. All nationalities enjoy political freedom and social equality. The people are thrifty and hard working, and are making a good fight against the depression and havoc of the war." In the same way, Dr. Henry Moskowitz, in his report on Jewish Reconstruction (1926), while deploring the vogue of political and social anti-Semitism, bore witness to the efficiency evident in the Jewish trade-schools of Kishineff, Bender and Orhei, and the progress of Jewish agricultural development; he reported that three gold medals were awarded in the Kishineff Exposition of 1925 to the Jewish relief organization, the "Ort," and that Queen Marie had personally thanked the officials. The Roumanian character is naturally tolerant (see p. 219, as is shown by the fact that Roumania, unlike France, Poland and Jugoslavia, did not disturb the notoriously disloyal church authorities in the annexed territories; and the recent wave of anti-Semitism, still so rampant in Hungary, seems subsiding in Roumania. It arose, curiously enough, in the medical schools. No discrimination exists in the Roumanian universities against the Jews, who form a very large percentage of

the students, especially in the professional schools, which have been overcrowded since the war. Anti-Semitic students suddenly demanded that Jewish corpses be provided for dissection, in proportion to the number of Jewish students. The rabbis forbade such use of Jewish bodies, and the battle was on. It led to excesses, and has been regrettably exploited by clever politicians. Nevertheless the status of the Jew in Bessarabia has improved enormously since the Russian days of the province; one has only to read Cyrus Adler's book, or a few anecdotes in Prince Urusoff's. They give a vivid picture of the wretched condition of the Bessarabian Jews a generation ago.

The banking situation in Bessarabia, as in the other new provinces, was completely upset by the change in government; the chief banking institutions were branches of the great Russian banks, and it has taken years to wind up their affairs. At the present day, Bessarabia is served by branches of most of the leading Bucharest institutions; incidentally, they handle huge sums transmitted from the United States; many Bessarabian Jews who have found new homes over here, send much money back to their relatives; one Kishineff banker told me that this American money was a saving factor in the general business depression. There is complaint, as generally in Roumania, of



tight money, particularly for business expansion, which is an attractive field in this little-developed country; and high rates, up to 3 and 4% a month for well-secured accommodation, are not uncommon. The Roumanian banking authorities have set their faces like flint against inflation, and depreciation of the currency; perhaps they have erred a bit in making legitimate accommodation rather difficult. But with the funding of the Roumanian debt by M. Titulesco in December 1925, American capital will doubtless flow into Roumania, where it has an attractive field, and Bessarabian needs will be met. Under the Russians, in 1912, there were 65 banks and other credit institutions doing business in Bessarabia, with total assets amounting to 85,368,953 rubles (@ 50¢); there were also several mortgage-loan companies for the large land-owners, a government land bank for the nobility, one for the peasantry, and the Cherson Zemstvo-Bank. It is a commentary on the character of the Russian land-owners that 70% of all the large estates were mortgaged; loans totaling 111,000,000 rubles had been made on 3,190,000 acres of land, worth about 186,000,000 rubles; and this money was largely spent in extravagance, not used for improvements.

From 1904 on, there was rapid development of coöperative societies in Bessarabia, together with

savings banks and loan offices; in 1911, there were 165 loan societies, 117 savings banks, 43 professional savings and loan societies, and 8 Zemstvo loan offices; these had assets of nearly 10,000,000 rubles. There were also 89 government savings banks, with deposits of 9,000,000 rubles. Today, there are toward 500 of these coöperative institutions; these are divided between popular banks, with a paid-in capital of some six million lei, a reserve fund of over twenty million lei, and deposits of over 25,000,000 lei. The rapid depreciation of the leu, which now hovers at about  $\frac{1}{2}\phi$ , was a great blow to these institutions; and in the enormous need of capital in the new Roumania, Bessarabia has been slighted. I was given, as a typical case, that of Mireni (Kishineff), a town of some 5000 people, where the town coöperative had a capital of 300,000 gold rubles before the war, and has only 200,000 paper lei today.

They have to deal further with the difficulty of finding trained personnel at the low salaries they offer and complain that politics has found its way into that field also. Nevertheless these coöperatives have a bright future, being already installed in a country where the farmers now own the land, and stand on the edge of that expansion which has changed our own West so completely

during our lifetime. Doubtless American capital will flow into this course also, by way of Bucharest or the big banks in Kishineff, with their close New York affiliations.

## CHAPTER IV

### EARLY HISTORY

Bessarabia, then, is a rich farming and grazing country; but its sad history is not due to its neighbors' covetousness of these privileges. Bessarabia has the doubtful advantage of controlling the mouths of the Danube, the greatest navigable river of Central and Eastern Europe, down which floats the traffic of Bavaria, Austria, Bohemia, Hungary, Serbia, Roumania and Bulgaria; and she possesses on the Dniester a series of ports—Hotin, Bender (Tighina) and Akkerman (Cetatea Albă)—which are the nearest outlets to the sea for Poland and (till the founding of Odessa) the Ukraine. So Bessarabia has always been a pawn in contests between Turks, Poles, Hungarians, Austrians and Russians for its strategic advantages.

When our era opens, we find the Dacians established in this corner of Europe; Greek traders had settled along the coast, and penetrated inland; and Roman merchants and colonists were filtering in. The Dacians long defied the Roman Empire; Augustus had to give up his dream of subjecting

them; but finally Trajan succeeded (in 107 A. D.) in subjugating them; and Bessarabia, with other parts of Dacia, knew its first strong, centralized government. Pârvan, Director of the Roumanian School of Classical Studies in Rome, has recently shown that knowledge of Latin must have been widespread in Dacia before the Roman conquest; in any case, whether there was Roman colonization on a large scale or not, Latin became the current spoken language of the country, as of Mœsia and Noricum, the provinces which formed a connection with Italy. This Latin has never died out. For a thousand years, no one ever wrote it; it was the despised dialect of shepherds and peasants, who lived under a dozen different governments, many more or less hostile to the language; but the tough conservatism of the Daco-Roman prevailed; religious propaganda, in Reformation days, committed the language to writing; and during the nineteenth century, Roumanian had a stately literary development. Roumanian poetry, based on popular ballads, is especially melodious.

This preservation of Latin, from the Adriatic out to the Black Sea, is the more astounding in that the Roman administration of Dacia lasted only about 160 years. Those were golden years, however—the period that Gibbon and Mommsen pronounced perhaps the happiest that civilized

humanity has ever known. In those generations of peace and law, Dacia was a closely-knit province; excellent roads bound together Transylvania, the Banat, the Bucovina, Moldavia (of which Bessarabia is the eastern half) and Wallachia. These formed Dacia, just as today they form Roumania; their bond of union is the Roumanian language, the modern form of Dacian Latin. Not merely is it the prevailing tongue over all this country, but it is spoken by hundreds of thousands more, in widely severed lands, from the Monte Maggiore in Istria, inland from Abbazia, down into the Pindus Mountains in Greece and out beyond the Dniester, in the Ukrainian territories which have recently been formed by the Russian authorities into the Moldavian Soviet Republic. Indeed, Roumanian acquaintances of mine tell me that during the war they found Roumanian villages in Eastern Siberia; and some years ago in Bessarabia I fell in with a Russian land-owner who, after Denikin's collapse—he had been an officer in his army—made his way around through the Caucasus, and was astonished to come upon Roumanian villages there, where the peasants, he said, talk just as they do in Bessarabia. I emphasize the importance of the language <sup>1</sup> at the very start, because it has been a most important factor in the

<sup>1</sup> See "Greater Roumania," Ch. XXIV.

struggles for union of the different branches of the Roumanian peoples.

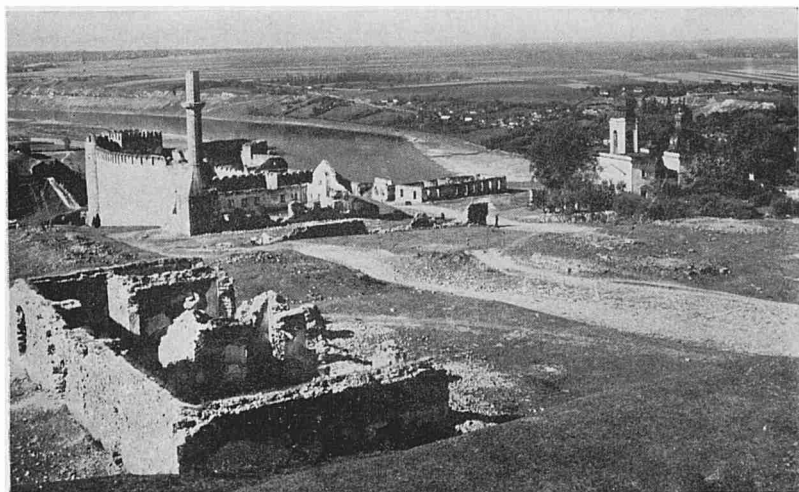
It would be interesting to follow the vicissitudes of Bessarabia after the departure of the Roman legions; but Vandals, Goths and Huns need detain us little. The invasions of the Slavs, in the sixth century, were more important. Daco-Roman and Slav must have been as closely in contact for centuries as are Russian and Roumanian peasants in Bessarabia today. The language was enormously affected, adopting hundreds of Slav words, and even Slav sounds, constructions and syntactical usages, which give a strange cast to the language (see pp. 83, 280). In any case, we must not forget that in Bessarabia, Slav and Daco-Roman have been in close and friendly contact for 1400 years.

Last of the great invasions from the northeast was that of the Tartars, in the thirteenth century. After their power was spent, we discover three Roumanian principalities arising—Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia. One of the early Wallachian rulers, Mircea the Old, of a family named Basarab, in a document of 1387 A. D., boasts that he is ruler not only of Transylvania and the Banat, but of the Tartar districts, as well as both shores of the Danube, up to the Great Sea. Tartars and Turks were so much impressed by the prowess of

the Basarabs that they called their country Basarabia. This term has been loosely used, sometimes covering even all Roumania, sometimes Wallachia, sometimes Moldavia, but in later centuries prevailing either the whole district between the Danube, Pruth, Dniester and Black Sea (in which sense we use it) or the southern part of this region—the Budjak (Bugeac).

As the Moldavian principality grew in power, its rulers felt the need of a port; Hotin, which commanded a much-used crossing of the Dniester, was their first acquisition. In a document of 1387, we find mention of a Moldavian governor of Hotin, so that at the time when the Wallachians were established in the south of Bessarabia, the Moldavians were already in possession of its chief northern stronghold. Alexander the Good of Moldavia, who came to the throne in 1400, found the Tartars weakened by their great defeat of 1380 at the hands of the Russians, and drove them from Bender (Tighina), which lay on the great highway connecting the interior with the Genoese port of Caffa (Theodosia) in the Crimea. The Genoese had another port on the Dniester itself, Akkerman (Cetatea Albă), for which they paid tribute to the Tartars. Alexander ousted the Tartars from this region also, some time before 1408, and the Genoese of Akkerman became his





FORTIFICATIONS OF HOTIN



THE TOWN AND FORTRESS OF SOROCA ON THE DNIESTER

tributaries; he confirmed them in all their rights. Thus early in the fifteenth century, the whole bank of the Dniester became Moldavian. But Alexander was not satisfied. He wanted a port directly on the Danube; and shortly before 1412, he secured Kilia (Chilia), which was in the "Land of the Basarabs"—Wallachia. This was another Genoese trading-center. The Wallachian princes hated to lose their tribute, and fought for Kilia, but in vain. Alexander and Mircea made a treaty, by which the Sereth (Siret) and one of its upper affluents became the boundary between Moldavia and Wallachia. Moldavia was now in control of the whole region between Carpathians, Sereth, Danube and Dniester—a country of some 36,000 square miles, of which Bessarabia made up almost a half.

## CHAPTER V

### THE TURKISH INVASIONS

This little state was bordered by powerful enemies. To the north lay Poland, anxious for an outlet to the sea. East were the Cossacks, who constantly raided Moldavian territory. Alexander fortified strongly Hotin, Kilia and Akkerman. But a more formidable foe attacked from the south. The Turks had already, in 1389, defeated the Serbs in the Battle of Kossovo; in 1393 they conquered Bulgaria. Bajazid turned north to punish Mircea for his presumption in aiding the Serbs; but Mircea routed him at the gates of Craiova (1394). Bajazid got his revenge two years later, at the Battle of Nicopolis, and Mircea had to cede him Silistra and the coast of the Dobrudja. Then the Turks turned their attention to Moldavia, and attacked Akkerman. Alexander repulsed them; but while he was feverishly strengthening his border cities, the Hungarians and the Poles came to an agreement to divide Moldavia between them. Poland was to have Bessarabia, Hungary Moldavia proper, with Kilia. Luckily this early partition of Moldavia

never was carried out. To judge by the testimony of a French traveler, Guillebert de Lannoy, who came to Akkerman in 1420 from Poland, Bessarabia had a good police system. De Lannoy was robbed on the highway not far from Akkerman; within eight hours, the authorities had discovered the robbers, obtained de Lannoy's belongings, and brought the robbers before him all bound for execution.

After Alexander's death, several incompetent rulers frittered away their inheritance; one of them, Peter Aaron, in 1456, three years after the fall of Constantinople, began paying tribute to the Sultan, of 2000 gold pieces a year. Hotin had been ceded to the Poles, and Kilia to the Hungarians. But in 1457 there came to the throne the most energetic of all the Moldavian monarchs—Stephen the Great. His first achievement (1459) was the recovery of Hotin from the Poles. He paid his vassals who assisted him, with large grants of land in the desolate but fertile interior plains of Bessarabia; we have, e. g., notice of a grant to a certain Bilau, and the chief village on this tract is still called Bilava or Bilautzi. The map of Bessarabia is covered with place names with such endings (or names in -eshti or -eni), which commemorate similar land grants through the centuries. Our own Southwest was parceled

out by the Spanish monarchs after much the same fashion.

Stephen next turned his attention to Kilia, which was now in Wallachian and Hungarian hands. His first attack, in 1462, was repulsed; but early in 1465 he succeeded in taking it, and in gratitude founded the famous monastery of Putna, in the Bucovina, which recalls today the magnificence of the Moldavian court. The Hungarians tried to recover Kilia, and Matthias Corvinus led his army well into Moldavia; but Stephen drove him back, and the Moldavian archers thrice shot Matthias himself, who bore the arrow-scars to his dying day. Meanwhile the Tartars had crossed the Dniester (1469) and were ravaging Bessarabia. Stephen fell upon them and captured their commander, brother of their Khan; and few were the survivors who succeeded in returning to the Ukraine. Deciding that he needed other fortresses on the Dniester between Hotin and Akkerman, Stephen built the stronghold of Orhei, on the Râut, a few miles from the Dniester; and as the crossing of Soroca was unprotected, he fortified that town also.

While he was thus busied, the Wallachian prince Ralph the Handsome (Radu-cel-Frumos) raised an army to recapture Kilia. Stephen anticipated him by a rapid march, scattered his

forces, and entered Bucharest, his capital, in triumph, in 1473, setting another prince, a Basarab, on the Wallachian throne. Ralph appealed to the Porte, and a great Turkish army, under Soleyman Pasha the Eunuch, invaded Moldavia. Stephen drew them on to the edge of the great forest at Vaslui; his troops rushed out of the woods, threw the Turks into confusion, and drove them back over the Danube, enslaving great numbers of them (Jan. 10, 1475).

Mohammed II, conqueror of Constantinople, vowed vengeance, and sent a Turkish fleet and Tartar army against Kilia and Akkerman; the fortifications of the latter were hurriedly strengthened and to this day one can read the inscription of 1476, commemorating the raising of the "Great Gate," with the Moldavian ox and star upon it. Stephen sought aid even from the West; the Genoese star had set, their traders having already been driven out by the Turks from Theodosia; he appealed to the Doge of Venice, in a letter which says: "I am certain that the Turks will again come against me this summer, to get my two cities Kilia and Akkerman. . . . Meanwhile I desire to be aided today, for the time is short, and does not allow us to make more extensive preparations. And Your Highness can consider that these two towns are the whole of Moldavia, that these two

fortresses are a bulwark for Hungary and for Poland." Mohammed himself remarked: "So long as Moldavia is master of Kilia and Akkerman, and Hungary of Belgrade, we shall not subdue the infidel."

In the spring of 1476 Mohammed's preparations were finished; he crossed the Danube on a bridge of boats, and pressed forward into Moldavia. Stephen followed the same tactics as before; he led the enemy on to the edge of the forests; finally, on July 26, he gave battle, at a place called Valea-Albă (White Valley) or Răsboieni. Mohammed won the day, captured Suceava, the capital of Moldavia, and burned it. But the plague broke out in his army, which was short of provisions; Hotin held out and his Tartar allies were driven across the Dniester; so he compromised with Stephen, leaving him undisturbed in his possessions, but receiving the tribute agreed upon with Peter Aaron, which Stephen had not been paying. Stephen continued to pay this tribute all his reign; but he immediately set about restoring his fortifications; we possess another inscription at Akkerman commemorating his restorations in about 1480.

And now the Wallachians again attempted to capture Kilia, both in 1481 and 1483, but without

success. In 1483, Mohammed died; his successor, Bajazid II, expressed his conviction that "Kilia is the key and the gate to the whole of Moldavia and Wallachia, while Akkerman is the key and the gate to all Poland, Tartary and the Black Sea." He immediately set on foot a powerful expedition; on July 14, 1484, Kilia capitulated, after a week's ferocious bombardment; Akkerman fell the 4th of August, and of all that flourishing commercial city, there remained only 200 families of fishermen. The Black Sea was now a Turkish lake; the Turks held these two cities until late in the eighteenth century, when they again returned for a few decades into Moldavian possession.

The Turks contented themselves with a narrow strip of territory around these cities—the Sanjak of Kilia and the Sanjak of Akkerman—as they did with the cities they wrested from the Wallachians along the Danube—Orshova, Severin, Giurgiu, Braila and Ismail—and their later acquisitions from Moldavia of Bender (1538) and Hotin (1713). But they otherwise interfered little with the administration of the Roumanian principalities, which maintained their independence. Indeed, the treaties drawn with the Turks at this time expressly forbid them to build mosques or own property in Roumanian territory, or to marry



Roumanian women.<sup>1</sup> No Turkish pashas ever ruled in Wallachia or Moldavia, as they did in Hungary. But they did have complete possession of these border cities which they had conquered, and of the adjacent sanjaks; these latter were however cultivated by Roumanian peasants, whom the Turks left undisturbed in their language and religion.

Bessarabia, then, never formed an integral part of the Turkish Empire. Except for these border sanjaks, Bessarabia remained part of Moldavia, which the Porte recognized as a sovereign state. This point is so important, as affecting historic claims upon Bessarabia, that we must glance at the treaties just referred to—remembering that during this same period, Hungary was a Turkish pashalik for a century and a half, in which Mohammedan pashas governed, and Turks had every right and privilege, including that of building mosques and worshiping according to the forms of their religion. But by the terms of the treaties with the Roumanian Principalities, the Turks bound themselves to respect the independence of their colleagues, rather than vassals. (I use the text printed in Hamangiu's General Code of Roumania.) The earliest, of 1393, be-

<sup>1</sup> For details, see my article on Bessarabia in the memorial to Queen Marie (1926), pp. 49-51, hereinafter quoted.

tween Mircea I and the Sultan Bajazid Ilderim, provides (§ 1) that the Principality "shall be administered according to its own laws, and that the Voyevode of Roumania shall have full power of making war with his neighbors and of concluding bonds of alliance with them, whensoever he may desire; and finally that he shall be master, for life and death, over his subjects . . . 4. The Princes, Christians, shall be elected to the Metropolitan and the boyars (great land-owners)." It was not even necessary that the Porte should sanction this election—a practice which grew up in the eighteenth century, and developed into appointment by the Porte, but always of a Christian.

In the treaty of 1460 between Vlad V of Roumania and the Sultan Mohammed II, conqueror of Constantinople, § 1 provides that "the Turks shall never interfere in the affairs of the country, nor govern it, nor enter the country, except that one single Imperial Commissioner shall go in, but even he only with the Prince's permission." § 2 repeats § 1 of the Treaty of 1393. The Roumanians were to pay 10,000 gold pieces as tribute to the Sultan, in return for military protection; that however did not make them Turkish subjects, nor bring them within the Turkish Empire; for years the United States paid a larger sum to the Bey of Barbary, for security against the pirates;

that did not however make us his subjects. § 6 provides that when a Mohammedan has a lawsuit with a Roumanian, it shall be tried before the Divan (Court) of the Prince, and the judge's decision shall be enforced. § 8 forbids Turks to hire Roumanian manservants or maidservants or to have any place of worship. The Treaty of 1511, between Bogdan and the Sultan Bajazid II, whose face we know through Gentile Bellini's wonderful portrait, in § 1, states: "The Porte recognizes Moldavia as a free and independent country," and goes on to confirm Moldavian rights in detail. § 7 reads: "The Moldavians shall be able to buy and hold a house in Constantinople as the residence of their ambassadors, and in it they may also build a church. 8. The Turks shall not be able to buy or own land in Moldavia, nor settle in the country, nor have or build any kind of mosque." Here the Roumanians have rights superior to the Turks—and this only 15 years before the Battle of Mohacs, which plunged Hungary into servitude to Turkey.

Still more striking is the Treaty of 1634, between Basil Lupu, Prince of Moldavia, and the Sultan Mohammed IV. In 1634, Turkish Pashas had ruled Hungary from Buda for over a century; the Pasha of Temeshvar governed the Banat; prayers rose to Allah from mosques all over the

Hungarian plain; Roumania was almost entirely encircled by Turkish territory; yet this treaty also begins: "The Porte recognizes Moldavia as a free and independent country. 2. The people of Moldavia shall enjoy, as in the past, all their liberties." The treaty specifically forbids any interference by the Turks in internal affairs, safeguards the "laws, customs, rights and privileges of this country"; in § 5, guarantees that "the frontiers of Moldavia shall be preserved untouched in all their extent. 6. Mohammedan religious services shall be forbidden on all Moldavian territory. . . . 9. Moldavia shall keep the title of an independent country. This title shall be reproduced in all communications addressed by the Ottoman Porte to the Prince." These provisions still governed Turkish-Moldavian relations in 1812, when Russia seized Bessarabia—from Turkey, according to M. Rakovsky, and our own State Department.

But even the Treaty of Paris, of March 30, 1856, recognized Bessarabia as formerly Moldavian. § 21 provides: "The territory ceded by Russia (i. e., the three southern counties of Bessarabia) shall be annexed to the Principality of Moldavia, under the suzerainty of the Sublime Porte. The inhabitants of this territory shall enjoy the rights and privileges assured to the

Principalities. . . . 22. The Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia shall continue to enjoy, under the suzerainty of the Porte and under the guarantee of the Contracting Powers, the privileges and immunities of which they are in possession. . . . There shall be no special right of interference in their internal affairs. 23. The Sublime Porte engages to maintain for the aforesaid Principalities an independent and national administration." That is, this treaty repeats and confirms what had been commonplaces of Turkish-Moldavian relations for centuries. Furthermore, the Convention of Paris, of Aug. 7, 1858, reaffirms the privileges of the Principalities, "on the basis of the capitulations issued by the Sultans Bajazid I, Mohammed II, Selim I and Soleyman II, which established their autonomy, regulating their relations with the Sublime Porte."

To return to our narrative. At first, Stephen had dreams of recovering his lost Bessarabian cities with Polish help, and even accepted Polish overlordship; but as he discovered that King Casimir was treating with Turkey behind his back, he broke his new alliance, and raided the Polish territory of Pocutia. Casimir's successor, John Albert, set out to chastise Stephen, and annex Moldavia; but instead Stephen defeated the

Poles in his last great battle (Dumbrava-Roshie, in 1497), and annexed Pocutia to Moldavia, with the cities of Kolomea, Sniatyn and Halicz. Stephen was also anxious to be on good terms with the rising power of Russia, and gave his daughter Ileana (Helen) to the Russian Crown Prince, Demetrius, son of Ivan III.

Stephen the Great died in 1504. Although he had lost Kilia and Akkerman to the Turks, he had done much for Bessarabia, and a number of its settlements date from his time. His successors fought among themselves for their inheritance; and one of them, Peter Raresh, had to meet in 1538 an overwhelming combination—the Poles attacking Hotin, the Tartars crossing the Dniester, and Soleyman the Magnificent, with a hundred heavy cannon, crossing the Danube and ascending the Pruth. Peter was deserted by his vassals, the boyars (landed proprietors); the Sultan entered Suceava and set up a rival prince of Moldavia, while Peter took refuge in Transylvania. Soleyman next sent his janissaries to capture Bender—then, as today, called Tighina; after its capture, Soleyman built over its fortress, and called it in Turkish Bender—The Gate. Then Soleyman succeeded in annexing also the Budjak; the boundary line of this district begins at Salcutza in the Botna Valley, runs due west, cutting the Cogalnic below

Grădishte, and reaches the Ialpug above Javgur (Javhur), following the Ialpug down to the border of the Sanjak of Kilia.

The Turks had now succeeded in appropriating the eastern border of Bessarabia (except Hotin), and the southern strip—Kilia and the Budjak. But they seem to have had little influence on the life of most of Bessarabia, and even the Roumanian peasants in their sanjaks. Conversions to Mohammedanism, frequent in Bosnia, Albania and Bulgaria, seem to have been rare here, and religious persecution almost unheard-of. Paul of Aleppo, writing of the life of the Christians in these sanjaks, and especially about Ismail, remarks that it is “agreeable, both because the inhabitants can enjoy law and order, and because the taxes, except for the *harach*, are insignificant.” They even had their own Christian hierarchy, separate from that of Moldavia; and their metropolitan—of Proilavia and Ismail—held sway also over a number of Roumanian churches in the Ukraine, of which the most important was Balta, till recently seat of the Soviet Moldavian Republic. A number of Roumanian documents connected with the ordination of priests in these Ukrainian towns have been preserved, and some are published in vol. xxxi (1913) of the Memoirs

of the Historical Society of Odessa. The Turkish Bey of Bender, in 1580, writing to the Polish Starost of Ryshkoff, uses Roumanian!

Up to this point, we have heard merely of the border cities of Bessarabia. Not till 1436 have we any documentary evidence of the village of Kishineff, today its chief city. It was founded by a certain Vlaïcu, uncle of Stephen the Great, and governor of Hotin, Orhei and Akkerman. In 1576, his great-granddaughter sold her rights to Kishineff to a certain Dragosh for 500 Tartar zlotys. Dragosh's wife sold her claims to Kishineff in 1617 to Constantine Roshca for 180 gold-pieces; and we learn from a document of 1641 that Basil Lupu of Moldavia granted the monks of the monasteries of St. Vineri of Jassy and of Balicai in Jassy, that they should receive tithes "of all the bread and the vegetables and flax and hemp and revenues of Kishineff." The next year, Kishineff is spoken of as a "sat"—an incorporated village; and in 1666, it had progressed to the dignity of "târg"—"market-town." But Demetrius Cantemir, in his history of Moldavia (1717), refers to it as a "small market-town of slight importance," with a population "of Christians, Armenians and Jews." The original settlement was down by the stream; and in a document of



1748, the merchants of Kishineff refer to the burning of the town by the Russians, in their expedition against Hotin, and the rebuilding on land higher up, belonging to the monastery of Galata, in Jassy.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were a period of slow disintegration for Moldavia and Turkey, but of rapid rise for Austria and Russia. Whereas the solicitude of the earlier rulers of Moldavia, in their anxiety to retain Bessarabia, had been to guard themselves against Poles and Tartars and Turks, new and more powerful neighbors now appeared on the scene. The last great struggles of Turks, Tartars and Poles on Moldavian soil occurred early in the seventeenth century, culminating in a great defeat of the Poles; the Peace of Hotin restored this city to Moldavia, in 1621. Three years later another treaty stipulated that the Tartars should be expelled from the Budjak in southern Bessarabia; but the latter, under a talented leader, Cantemir Mirza, held out for over ten years; and later Tartar hordes which ravaged Bessarabia were so savage that a contemporary, the boyar Toader Ianovitch, states that "between Dniester and Pruth not a house was left." Fortunately for Bessarabia, Prince Basil Lupu of Moldavia, a man of great ability, now

came to the throne, and took special interest in Bessarabian problems. Entering Kilia with his army, in the campaign against Cantemir Mirza, he is petitioned by the Moldavians there resident to build them a church; and the inscription commemorating the consecration of the church of St. Nicholas, under "John Basil Voyevode, by the grace of God ruler of the land of Moldavia," is still in existence. A Roman Catholic traveler, Bishop Peter Stanislavoff of Nicopolis, was struck by the iron gates and drawbridges of Kilia. He says that in the city there were 300 houses of Tartars, with four mosques; in the extensive suburbs, 500 houses of Tartars, with five mosques, and 400 houses of "schismatics" of different nationality, with two orthodox churches, one of them built by Basil Lupu. Basil may also have built the church of St. Nicholas in Ismail, which Paul of Aleppo tells us had in 1658 12,000 families, Roumanian and Bulgarian.

The Cossacks now supplanted the Tartars in the rôle of raiders from over the Dniester. They had just won their independence from the Poles, and were so redoubtable that Basil made a family alliance with their Hatman, giving his daughter Ruxanda to the heir apparent, Timush. This served him in good stead when a rival, George Stephen, with Hungarian help, succeeded in driving him out

of Jassy; Timush and his Cossacks raided Moldavia and drove George Stephen into Wallachia. But when the Cossacks left, George Stephen returned; Basil went to Constantinople for aid from the Sultan, and died there. George Stephen also looked for aid beyond the Dniester. He made a treaty with Grand Duke Alexis Michaelovitch of Moscow, for the recovery of the Bessarabian territories occupied by Turks and Tartars; the Russians bound themselves by the treaty not to ask tribute from Moldavia for this service. That is the first formal connection between Russia and Moldavia; but it came to nothing.

Troubles now broke out among the Cossacks; part declared for Russia, part for Poland; and in the Armistice of Andrusov (1667), Russia annexed the Ukraine beyond the Dnieper, that between the Dnieper and the Dniester remaining Polish. Dissatisfied Cossacks appealed to the Porte, and a long war broke out between Poles and Turks, fought in part on Moldavian territory. A Polish traveler who succeeded with difficulty in reaching Jassy at that time, writes that he passed no man on the road, which was however lined with corpses. Fortune smiled on Mohammed IV, who penetrated deep into Poland with a Turkish-Roumanian army; and in the Peace of Buczacz (1672), the Poles surrendered the Polish Ukraine

to Peter Doroshenco, a Turkish vassal prince, and ceded Podolia, with its chief city Kamenetz-Podolsk, outright to the Turks, together with the promise of an annual tribute, and with a war indemnity of 80,000 thalers.

The Sultan had been unfavorably impressed, in Moldavia and in his association with his Moldavian allies, with the independence they enjoyed, as contrasted with the vassaldom of Serbs, Bulgarians and Hungarians, all of whom were, or had been, directly governed by Turkish pashas. The time seemed to him ripe for declaring Moldavia a pashalik; but he determined to test his ground, for he knew that the great Moldavian boyars would have to be won over first. The Grand Vizier asked Prince Petriceico of Moldavia to send him one of the leading boyars for a consultation; and by good fortune Myron Costin, the historian, was chosen. He has left us a graphic account of the conversation. "The Grand Vizier," he says, "asked him to be seated before him, and then asked him to tell him frankly whether he thought it wise for the Empire to have occupied Kamenetz or not. But Myron replied that he was afraid to speak frankly. The Vizier laughed at him, and told him to speak out and have no fear. Then Costin said: 'We Moldavians are pleased to have the Empire spread in every direction as far as

possible; but we do not want to have it extend over our country.' Then the Vizier laughed again, and said to him: 'You have spoken frankly,' and then he asked him: 'How would you consider our leaving a Turkish army in Hotin with Prince Petriceico, to guard the country and Kamenetz?' " Myron Costin replied that such a measure would be unwise, since the country was poor and without provisions. The Vizier then quoted the opinion of some of the boyars that the Turkish army should winter in Moldavia, to protect the country from Polish reprisals. Myron objected that the Poles would not come on a raid, for there was nothing for them to carry off. So the Sultan gave up for the moment the idea of reducing Moldavia to a subject state; its Prince continued to be independent, with only the obligation to pay tribute and provide things necessary for the Turkish armies in their passage through the country.

But with a Turkish pasha at Kamenetz up in Poland, and a Turkish citadel opposite Hotin, to protect their communications, the Turkish exactions became a great burden. Prince Petriceico tested Moscow for relief against the Turks; the Russians made fair promises, but when the Moldavians notified them that the time was ripe, they found excuses; and both Gregory Ghica of Wal-

lachia and Stephen Petriceico appealed to the Poles, who were still smarting under the sting of their defeat. The famous John Sobieski was now leader of the Polish armies; with Roumanian help, he won a great victory over the Turks near Hotin on Nov. 10, 1673, capturing 66 Turkish banners and 120 cannon. Hotin received a Polish garrison, and a Polish contingent was stationed at Jassy. But Sobieski had to turn his attention elsewhere; the Sultan sent a Tartar force up into Moldavia, which drove out Petriceico; and a Prince more favorable to the Turks was found in Dumitrashco Cantacuzene. The Tartars took advantage of the opportunity to plunder Moldavia; and a traveler who passed through the country at that time reports that two-thirds of the population had either perished or scattered in every direction.

The Turks had no sooner made peace with the Poles (1676) than war broke out with the Russians; with Wallachian and Moldavian help, the Russians were defeated (1678), though peace was not made till 1681. The Czar recognized as Turkish all the Ukraine south of Kieff, from the Dnieper to the Dniester; this was united by the Turks as an autonomous province with Moldavia, Prince Duca receiving the title of Lord of Moldavia and the Ukraine (June 25, 1681). But that union was

brief. In 1683, the Turks suffered their greatest defeat, at the hands of John Sobieski, under the walls of Vienna; Hungary threw off the yoke, and the Cossacks of the Ukraine asserted their independence. In the confusion which ensued, a Moldavian expedition plundered the Tartar Budjak, but was finally driven back. John Sobieski himself came down into Moldavia twice with Polish armies, and occupied the northern part of the country. Cossacks again raided the region around Orhei. The Moldavian historian Nicholas Costin gives us this picture of the condition of his country at the end of the seventeenth century: "Matters had now reached such a state that the land of Moldavia was governed in three sections. The fortresses of Neamtz and Suceava, with Câmpulung and their districts, were held by the Poles, . . . and the fortress of Soroca. In like manner the districts of Orhei and Lapusna had been occupied by the Khan of Tartary." Costin enumerates the districts held by the Cossacks under this khan, and laments that Prince Cantemir had possession only of Jassy and lower Moldavia. Indeed, at the Peace of Carlowitz (Jan. 26, 1699), the Poles brought great pressure to bear on Turkey for the cession of the districts of Czernowitz, Suceava, Neamtz, Hotin and Soroca. The Turks however explained that Moldavia was not theirs



to give, being an independent principality; and the Poles finally contented themselves with the recovery of Podolia. So northern Moldavia was again united with Jassy; and the Tartars were forced back over the Dniester and down into the Budjak.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE RUSSIAN SEIZURE

Peter the Great was now Czar of Russia. The Moldavians had had unfortunate experiences in their efforts for Russian assistance from Ivan III and Alexis Michaelovitch; but Peter seemed of a different stamp. He wrested Azof and various cities along the Dnieper from the Turks, and even laid siege to Otchakov, only a few miles from Akkerman. Numerous Roumanians enlisted in his army, which contained one squadron of Roumanian cavalry. Moldavian hopes rose that with Russian help they might drive out the Turks from their border cities. Soon Peter sent them a strange and famous guest. Charles XII of Sweden, after his defeat in 1709 at Peter's hands, sought refuge in Moldavia, and lived for some time at Varnitza, near Bender. Peter decided to chastise the Turkish government for sheltering Charles, and in 1710 came down to Jassy, with the Czarina. There he signed the Russian-Moldavian treaty of alliance, which provided for the hereditary leadership of a prince of the Cantemir family, who should bear the title of Serene Lord of the

land of Moldavia, Sovereign (Samodertzetu), and Friend (Volegator) of the land of Russia, but not a subject vassal. The treaty provided that the Dniester should be the boundary; that the Budjak with all its cities should belong to Moldavia, except that Russian garrisons should be left there till the Moldavian administration was installed, and then withdrawn. The country was to pay not a cent of tribute. The Czar bound himself not to infringe the rights of the Moldavian sovereign, or whoever might succeed him. A great banquet was given to the Czar by the boyars to celebrate the treaty; they felt that at last the savior of Moldavia had come.

But the Turks came north along the Pruth and inflicted a terrible defeat on the Russian army at Stanileshti (June 1711); even the personal appeal of the Czarina to the Grand Vizier hardly availed to mitigate the severity of the terms imposed upon Peter. He had to abandon Moldavia immediately, renounce his sovereignty over the Cossacks, destroy the fortresses he had erected along the frontier, and restore Otchakov to the Porte. Prince Dumitrashco and many of his boyars had to take refuge in Russia. We have an interesting criticism of conditions in Russia at that time, as contrasted with Moldavia. John Neculce, one of the best Moldavian historians,

went up into Russia on this pilgrimage; after two years, he returned, because, he said, it is a country where men are not free to go where they want, and there is no great court there, as there is in Moldavia. And there is a moving document preserved, in a vow made by one of the Moldavian fugitives in Russia, George Lupashco Hajdeu: "I, grandson and blood-heir of Prince Stephen Petriceico, lord of the land of Moldavia, I, unfortunate fugitive from the land of my fathers, I, who was once a wealthy boyar, but who now am a wanderer in a strange land, so poor and poverty-stricken that in my old age I cannot even leave my God alms and a sacrifice, I promise that if God grants that Moldavia, or the district of Hotin, escapes from its enemies, the Turks, and my sons, or my grandsons, or my family regain possession of their estates and their holdings, a church shall be built to St. George in Dolineni (Hotin). . . . Let us not lose hope that God will pardon us, and that our dear Moldavia shall not always remain under the heel of the Mussulman. . . . May pagan feet not tread on my ancestors' graves, and if my ashes may not rest in my ancestral soil, may my descendants' have that good fortune!"

As a result of their victory, the Turks in 1712 placed a garrison in Hotin, rebuilt the fortress under the direction of French engineers, and made

the surrounding region into a sanjak. Moldavia was now shut in by Turkish border strips at Hotin, Bender, Akkerman, Kilia, Ismail and Reni. Their reinforcements and supplies continually traversed Moldavian territory, which was under obligation to assist them at Moldavian expense. The new sanjak was the most extensive on Moldavian territory, comprising a hundred villages and the market-towns of Lipcani-Briceni and Sulitza-Nouă. As the country had lost most of its Moldavian inhabitants, there was a constant immigration from Poland and the Ukraine, of landless peasants, largely fugitives from the severe serfdom which prevailed there. New villages arose in the districts of Hotin and Kishineff, altogether Ukrainian in speech; and many scattered Moldavians lost their language, so that today we find there many families with Roumanian names who do not know a word of Roumanian.

Farm labor had been scarce, of course, during these troubled centuries. The land was mainly in the hands of the great proprietors, the boyars. Many settlers had been brought into Bessarabia by princes like Alexander the Good and Stephen the Great; but their little farms were continually subdivided among the numerous children, who sold out, so that the great estates became more and more numerous. These were worked partly



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STREET SCENE IN NOUA-SULITZĂ

by serfs, partly by "slobozi" (free laborers)—Roumanians, Hungarians, Cossacks, Russians, Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, etc. Many of these settled permanently in Bessarabia, and the rich land attracted many other immigrants. The boyars, monasteries and other land-owners gave them strips of land, enough for gardens and raising enough hay and corn or wheat for their families; in return, they were bound to pay the owner a tithe of all the produce, and work for him a certain number of days a year, divided between the spring and fall plowing, sowing, harvesting, threshing and carting. In early days, every campaign over the border brought in hundreds or even thousands of laborers, seized in Poland or the Ukraine. Certain treaties stipulated that these men should be released and sent home, if they desired; but Demetrius Cantemir tells us that in his day many who had been brought to the interior of Moldavia had settled there and lost their language—a phenomenon of which our own day has given us so many examples among the prisoners of war, particularly in Russia.

These Moldavian agricultural laborers had the right of leaving one place for another; but the great boyars succeeded in making virtual serfs out of many of them; and a certain amount of serfdom had constantly existed in Moldavia; the

gypsies, for instance, were tied down to the soil. One of the most enlightened Moldavian princes, Constantine Mavrocordat, scandalized by the abuses of the system, summoned the boyars in 1749 to a great council in the church of the Three Hierarchs in Jassy; and as a result of Constantine's insistence, the serfs were freed—earlier than in most of Eastern Europe, particularly in Russia. Former serfs were given the right of leaving their masters, and in case they paid the owner a house tax, were to give him only 12 days of free labor per annum—indeed, only 6 in the border districts. The tithes were also subjected to outside arbitration in case of dispute. This was confirmed by Gregory Ghica in 1766. In Transylvania, this reform did not take place till 1784, as a consequence of the bloody revolt of the Roumanian peasantry under Horea against their Hungarian masters.

Bessarabia was now still more attractive to the poor Polish and Russian serfs. The former had to serve their masters free for 150 days every year, and the latter were virtually slaves. So clandestine immigration from Poland and the Ukraine flowed in on a large scale, particularly as Bessarabia, in good years, always had a shortage of farm labor. Most of these immigrants lost their language and were soon assimilated; but



near the border some established villages of their own, in which Polish, Ukrainian and Russian are still spoken.

And now Bessarabia is involved in Russian dreams of reaching Constantinople, and Austrian ambitions of extension to the Black Sea. This unfortunate country, after centuries of raids by Poles, Tartars, Turks and Cossacks, now becomes a pawn in contests of wider international range, destined finally to involve all Europe. Peter the Great had begun the march to Tzarigrad—the Emperor's City on the Bosphorus; the Empress Catherine even made the heir presumptive learn Greek from the cradle, that he might be prepared for the Byzantine throne. In 1768, a six-years' war broke out between Russia and Turkey. The Russians took Hotin, Bender and Jassy, and occupied Moldavia the whole extent of the war. In 1772, the partition of Poland gave Galicia and Lodomeria to Austria, and Volhynia and Podolia to Russia, so that Moldavia was now in immediate contact with the Austrian and Russian Empires. In the Peace of Kuchuk-Kainarji (1774), Turkey ceded to Russia the country between Dnieper and Bug, but retained the Bessarabian border fortresses and their sanjaks. Moldavia kept its independence, under Turkish suzerainty, as heretofore; but Catherine reserved to herself the right of

protecting the Christians of the Roumanian Principalities.

In that same year, Maria Theresa succeeded in lopping off from Moldavia its northern extremity, the Bucovina, with Czernowitz, its chief city, and Suceava, the holy city of Moldavia, with its tombs of Stephen the Great and other rulers. This was done by direct negotiation with officials of the Porte at Constantinople, against the frenzied but impotent protests of Gregory Ghica and his boyars. The Bucovina was to form a "corridor" between the Austrian provinces of Transylvania and Galicia. The Turkish officials were later disavowed; but the transaction was already consummated.

In 1787, Russia and Austria declared war on Turkey. The Empress Catherine had visions of making her favorite Potemkin Prince of Dacia—a Russian vassal state corresponding to the ancient Roman Dacia, Greater Roumania of today—and of thus taking a long step toward Tzarigrad. The war dragged on till 1792, with the usual disastrous consequences for the Bessarabian farmer; but at the Peace of Jassy Turkey succeeded in keeping her grip on Moldavia. Russia obtained however the "Ukraine of the Khan" and advanced to the Dniester, now becoming Bessarabia's immediate neighbor to the East. The Tartars were

now also under Russian control; Russia demanded their evacuation from the Budjak, and by 1812, not a Tartar was left there. An eye-witness tells us that they simply disappeared, emigrating en masse. "Their towns perished with them. On their departure, they pulled down many of their houses; those that remained untouched, melted away of themselves, being built of adobe. After a month, not a trace could be seen of the multitude of villages with which they had covered the Budjak, except that the grass was thicker and of a deeper green in the court-yards of the former Tartar 'auls.' The Tartars left all their domestic animals abandoned in their villages, most of them starving to death. When you came near an abandoned house, you heard their cries and howls, and a crowd of cats, chickens, turkeys, geese and ducks rushed out to seek aid of man, their natural protector. For a long time the Cossacks and the Russian soldiers lived on nothing but poultry."

And now Napoleon comes on the scene. In 1806-7, he encouraged Czar Alexander Pavlovitch to begin another war with Turkey. Again the Turkish border fortresses, beginning with Hotin, fell into Russian hands; and Russian troops occupied both Moldavia and Wallachia. Gen. Kutusoff was made Governor-General of the Roumanian Principalities; they were formally annexed to

Russia, and made into two “gubernie”—governments, provinces—of the Russian Empire. The foreign consuls and diplomatic agents had to leave Jassy and Bucharest; the Russians reestablished the ancient bishopric of Akkerman, and appointed as Bishop Gabriel Banulesco-Bodoni, a Transylvanian Roumanian who had studied at Kieff. There was a truce of several years, during which the Russians administered both countries; but the Russians finally broke it, defeated the Turks by a surprise attack, and entered into peace negotiations, first at Giurgiu and then at Bucharest. They demanded the Roumanian Principalities; the Turks offered them the Budjak and the border sanjaks of Bessarabia (all that they had any right to cede). Negotiations dragged on for weeks, the Turks playing for time, since they knew that Napoleon was on the point of breaking with Russia. The Russians finally began hostilities again, and the Sultan yielded, ceding (on May 16, 1812) the whole of Bessarabia, the Pruth now constituting the boundary between the new Russian territory and the rest of Moldavia.

Technically, the Sultan had no right to cede any of this territory except the border fortresses and their sanjaks; the rest of Bessarabia was an integral part of Moldavia, and inalienable without the consent of the Prince and his “divan” (council).

But at the moment there was no prince, and Moldavia had been administered for years by a Russian Governor-General; so technical objections were overruled. Indeed, such formalities have never bulked large in treaty negotiations, even in our own day.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RUSSIA ORGANIZES THE PROVINCE

Bessarabia, as occupied by the Russians in 1812, comprised the Moldavian districts of Greceni, Codru, Hotarniceni, Orhei, Soroca, and parts of Jassy and Carligatura, which lay on both sides of the Pruth; the Turkish sanjaks (raias) of Hotin, Bender, Akkerman, Kilia, Ismaïl and Reni; and the Budjak or Tatarlyk, just evacuated by the Tartars. It comprised 45,630 square kilometers, and included 5 cities (i. e., towns with fortresses), some 14 or 15 market-towns, and 500–600 villages, with a total population, according to the official Russian figures of July 23, 1812, of 41,160 families, or about 250,000 persons; in 1813, the Russian estimate gives 55,560 families. By 1823, the population seems to have increased to 550,000; in 1829, it had fallen to 412,429; but from then on the official estimates show a constant gain; in 1846, 811,734; 1856, 990,274. We have no accurate knowledge of the population of Bessarabia during the last years of its independence; but we do know from many sources that the Russians had no sooner taken over the province than there was an

enormous exodus of the peasantry across the Pruth into free Moldavia; most scholars believe that Bessarabia lost about one-third of its population during the first year or two of the Russian occupation. Gen. Kisseleff himself (Kasso, "Russia on the Danube," p. 211) said: "The inhabitants fled out of Bessarabia, preferring the Turkish régime, hard though it was, to ours." We have a report of Bishop Demetrius Sulima of Bender and Akkerman to the Metropolitan, Gabriel Banulesco-Bodoni, stating (Nov. 9, 1812) that the entire population of the village of Saba (Shaba) near Akkerman had fled, except for three or four families. In their place, by the way, the Russians established French Swiss settlers, whose descendants still occupy this village. Nor is the reason hard to seek. The archives of Kishineff are still full of complaints from headmen of the villages, about exactions and outrages at the hands of the Russian troops; and word had spread among the peasants that the Russian system of serfdom was to be introduced, in place of the mild Moldavian land-tenure. So serious was the danger of depopulation that the Pruth was lined with garrisons to prevent Moldavians from crossing; and the government started a rumor all over Bessarabia that the plague was raging in Moldavia proper, which was not the case.

The first Russian census after the annexation (1816) revealed a province almost solidly Roumanian—of a population of about half a million, 92½% Moldavian and Ukrainian, 1½% Lipovans (Russian heterodox), 4½% Jews, 1.6% other races. We know that some Bulgarians had come in about 1770, 1790 and after 1806; and there was a large Bulgarian immigration in the first decade of Russian occupancy. Today, the Bulgarians form one of the most solid elements in Southern Bessarabia, numbering (with the Gagaoutzi, Turkish-speaking Christians also from the Dobrudja) nearly 150,000. Colonization brought in numerous Great Russian peasants, and the Russian bureaucracy imported Russian office-holders and professional men; according to the Roumanian estimate of 1920, the Great Russians were about 75,000 in number (2.9%), and the Lipovans and Cossacks 59,000 (2.2%); the Little Russians (Ukrainians) came to 254,000 (9.6%). That, plus about 10,000 Poles, brings the total number of Slavs to 545,000 in a population of 2,631,000, or about one-fifth; the Roumanians came to 1,683,000, just above ⅝; the Jews were almost exactly ¼ (267,000); of the other nationalities, the Germans were the most important. They were offered free land and many privileges by the Czars in the early nineteenth century, and have made much of South-



ern Bessarabia their own, having prospered greatly. The Union Pacific Railway tempted some of these Bessarabian Germans to emigrate to Kansas, where they were assured of finding land for wheat-raising like that to which they were used in Bessarabia; and today their descendants are flourishing in two counties of Kansas, Hays being the nearest large center.

There are about 10,000 gypsies in Bessarabia. Of the other nationalities, the Greeks are the most important; there are about 5000 of them, almost all engaged in business or banking in the cities. There are also several thousand Armenians and Albanians, and the French Swiss colony just mentioned, at Shaba, near Akkerman, where excellent wine is made. I had the privilege of attending their church service and visiting several of their leading citizens; although their colony is about a century old, they have kept up constant relations with their relatives in Switzerland, and many of the younger members have been educated there. But the collapse of the leu and the rise of the Swiss franc have put an end to that.

Alarmed by conditions in Bessarabia, the Russians proceeded slowly with their organization of the country as a Russian province (gubernia). Gen. Harting, Governor-General from 1813-16, had endeavored to introduce the system at once,

but was unfortunate in his selection of officials (Capodistria wrote to his successor, Bakhmetieff: "Send back at once out of Bessarabia all of Gen. Harting's appointees"), and roused vigorous protests from the boyars. The old Russian Imperial government was never an administrative success, and least of all in Bessarabia. Gen. Kissileff, venting his disgust over conditions under Harting, wrote Alexander I: "Everything there is for sale, everything has its price, and the prefects are obliged to steal more than the rest, seeing that they have paid twenty or thirty thousand rubles apiece for their nominations." As conditions were going from bad to worse, St. Petersburg finally appointed a Viceroy, Count Vorontzoff (1823-44), who remained there during the terms of seven governors. He did his best to improve matters; but we have a letter of Gen. Kisseleff's of June 11, 1833, in answer to one of his, saying: "You paint me a very sad picture of Bessarabia. The Moldavians are in a hurry to sell their estates, while in the Bucovina the land-owners pay a 30% tax, but praise the regularity and honesty of the administration. You have been badly served by the governors who keep being changed at Kishineff, and by those officials who are the dregs of Russia and Moldavia." Even Czar Alexander's rescript speaks of "unsatisfactory officials, unde-

sirable Russians, gathered in haste, in the exigencies of the time." A great curse was the official favoritism at St. Petersburg, by which huge grants of land, or appointments, were made at Bessarabian expense, without regard to Bessarabian advantage; indeed, the plan was in part to supplant the native Moldavian gentry. We find, e. g., that in the district of Akkerman, Count Nesselrode was given 25,000 acres in 1824 and the same amount also in Bender; in 1825, the daughter of Field-Marshal Kutusoff, 15,000; and so on for nearly sixty grants in those two districts alone.

These favorites of the Russian rulers became the new landed aristocracy of Bessarabia; but some of the Moldavian boyars were undisturbed; and some of those dispossessed by Turks or Russians left descendants who have always formed a privileged caste in Bessarabia, the "Mazils" and the "Razeshi." The Mazils kept or secured a certain amount of land and of privileges; they had their organization, with a captain; many had ancient documents confirming their ancestors in their rights. In fact, the Russians found it necessary to recognize the Mazils as a class apart, by a special law of March 10, 1847; and when, after the Revolution of 1905, an effort was made to do away with their privileged position, several villages of Mazils in the districts of Corneshti, Chiscăreni

and Teleneshti, rose as one man, and the government had to use dragoons to reduce them; their leaders were sent to Siberia, but finally they succeeded in recovering their rights. But the Agrarian Reform has put all on a level in Bessarabia, as elsewhere in Roumania; and the Mazils and Razeshi will survive merely as social distinctions. The Mazils were always intensely class-conscious; they never intermarried with the new-comers, particularly the Russians. The Razeshi were the descendants of Moldavian frontier guards, who had had land given them by the Moldavian princes in return for their services, and who had succeeded in keeping that land in their possession. They were not a caste apart, like the Mazils; the name Razesh simply indicates a form of land tenure; technically their land was the common property of a corporation, but actually each family occupied a certain portion, and the legal status of that land was a constant bone of contention between boyars, other land-owners, and different Razeshi. Below them was the landless farm-hand, whose status we have already pictured.

Unfortunately for the Bessarabians, corruption was not a transitory phenomenon. Prince Uru-soff, Governor-General in 1903-4, has written an interesting book on his experiences, in which he

says: "Now that mention has been made of illegal exactions, we shall dwell a moment on this subject. Once, with the aid of a prosecuting attorney, familiar with the region, I tried to reckon, in as close an approximation as possible, the amount of graft secured by the police. It came out over a million rubles a year. I became convinced myself that in the Bessarabian police system, graft plays a major rôle. It is not hard to convince oneself of that, on seeing underprefects of police driving in four-horse carriages, traveling first-class on the trains, buying houses and land, losing hundreds and thousands of rubles at cards. In general outline, this is the state of affairs: there are some men who do not take anything; a large number who take bribes within limits which, according to local opinion, are natural and proper, and finally a minority who take all the graft they can on every occasion and from everyone, like common criminals; these are the ones complained of by the Bessarabians, and from time to time governors shift them about or send them into other provinces, to receive in their place sometimes characters of the same type." That is, the Imperial Russian administration in Bessarabia exhibited much the same weaknesses that its historian will find in other remote provinces, relieved from time

to time by the appointment of strong or even noble characters, but speedily falling back into the conditions which made the Revolution inevitable.

Bessarabia had also a common experience with the other Russian border countries where language and traditions were non-Russian. Finland, Esthonia, Lithuania, Lettonia (Latvia), the Ukraine, White Russia, Poland, the Caucasus, all were subjected more or less to a process of Russification. Bessarabia went through a similar procedure. When Russia occupied Bessarabia in 1812, the country was overwhelmingly Roumanian in language and sympathies; and the Imperial Government went to work as elsewhere to make Russian the vernacular tongue. It is interesting to follow out this policy, in connection with the administration, political and religious, the schools, periodical literature and books.

## CHAPTER IX

### RUSSIFICATION BEGINS

Czar Alexander was an enlightened monarch; he was distressed at what he learned of the early results of the Russian occupation, and sent, on April 1, 1816, a rescript to the Metropolitan, Gabriel Banulesco-Bodoni, in which he said: "With the greatest regret I have ascertained in the most precise manner that my wishes have not been carried out, and that disorders have reached a very high degree, so that many innocent families of inoffensive peasants have left their homes and seek shelter beyond the frontier. All this, having attracted my attention, causes me to adopt various measures to do away with these evils and to give the inhabitants of Bessarabia a lot agreeing with their wishes, which are in full measure mine also. . . . My desire is to give them a civil administration in harmony with their customs, usages and laws." He ordered this edict translated into Roumanian. After appointing Bakhmetieff, he wrote him on Apr. 29, 1816, that Bessarabia needs "a special administration in conformity with her ancestral laws, her customs and her usages." Ac-

cordingly, an administrative act was promulgated for Bessarabia in 1818, in Russian and Roumanian, which gave a large measure of local autonomy. It was provided that both languages could be used in administration, keeping in view Russian laws, and retaining local laws and customs in respect to private property, while questions of civil and criminal law were to be handled only in Roumanian, and decided on the basis of Moldavian law and usage.

But within two years the Imperial Government gave itself a majority of votes in the Governing Council, and provided the Governor-General with the right of veto; in 1823 the local prefects, who had been elected, became appointive officials; and on Feb. 29, 1828, a new administrative act was promulgated, by which Bessarabia became a Russian province, dependent on the Ministry at St. Petersburg, like the rest. In 1833 Russian was made the sole language of civil administration. Yet we find occasional use made of Roumanian. About 1855, when cattle-thieving was rampant, the government issued a circular in Roumanian; in 1868 the Imperial Government printed in both Russian and Roumanian the documents connected with the edict abolishing serfdom; in 1877, Alexander II had his declaration of war against Turkey printed in Roumanian as well as Russian. In



the Roumanian village administrations, documents in both languages are to be found up to the latter part of the nineteenth century. The Governmental Zemstvo issued various documents in Roumanian, like a pamphlet descriptive of the phylloxera in 1886, and one warning against cholera, in 1893.

After the Revolution of 1905, a group of Moldavians—Pan Halippa, Stere, Pelivan and others—decided on the publication of a newspaper in Roumanian; and on June 27, 1906, appeared the first number of “Basarabia,” under E. Gavrilitzza as editor. It was published in the Cyrillic (Slav) character, but each issue had one article in the Roman lettering current in Roumania. It took a firm stand for the official use of Roumanian beside Russian in courts, church and schools; for the breaking up of the great landed estates; and for passive resistance to the authorities, to hasten these reforms. Naturally, the reactionaries triumphed, “Basarabia” was suppressed in March 1907, Gavrilitzza and Halippa were imprisoned, and it was not till after the Russian Revolution of 1917 that the revolutionary authorities again brought out many pamphlets in Roumanian, precursors of the new era.

As regards language and nationality, the words “Moldavian” and “Roumanian” are interchange-

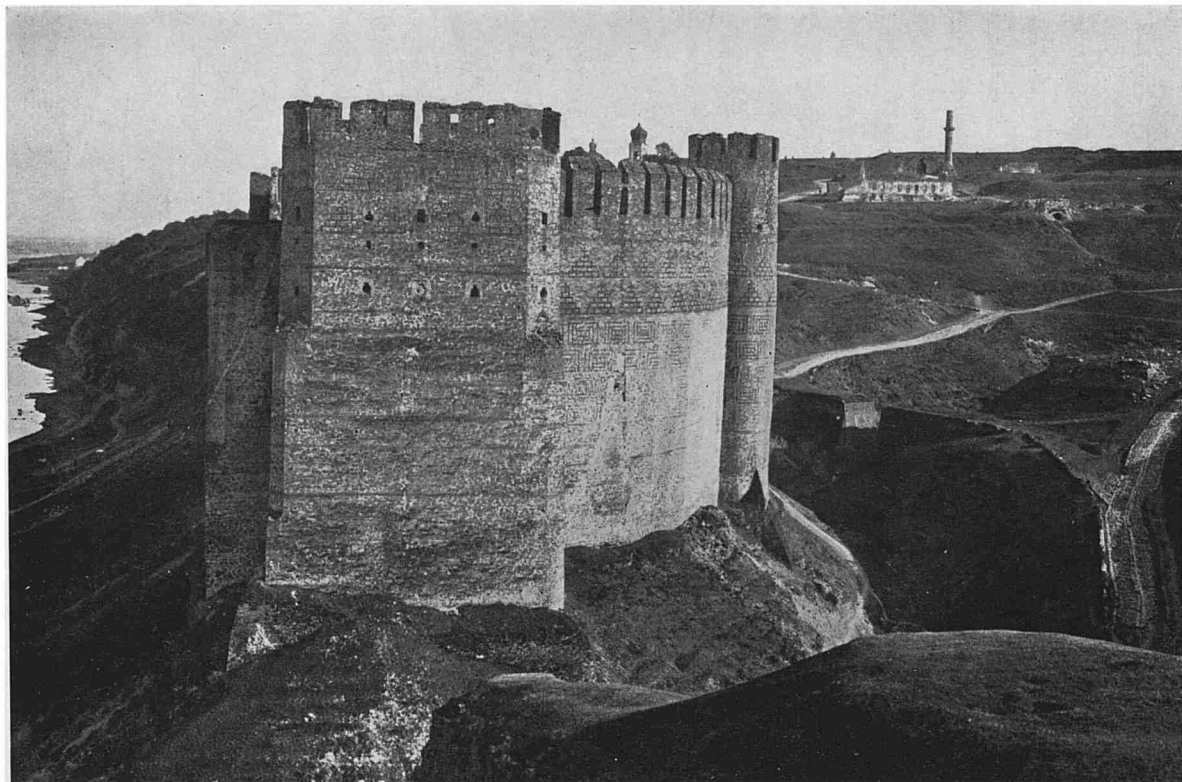
able, of course; but the Russians did not admit it, and taught the Roumanian-speaking peasantry of Bessarabia that they were different in language and race from their brethren beyond the Pruth. Indeed, they did use a different script and print, like the Serbs as contrasted with the Croats; they kept the old Cyrillic characters, which the Roumanians of the Old Kingdom discarded for Latin letters two generations ago; and in the Revolution of 1905, when the use of Roumanian was allowed for a few months in Bessarabia, some patriots exclaimed that they wanted Moldavian, and not Roumanian, books and papers. The Bessarabian Senator P. Fala, in his "Lectures," tells an amusing anecdote illustrating this. During the war, a Bessarabian peasant who was driving a sleigh-load of bread to the Russian front in Moldavia, and who was already some distance west of the Pruth, broke one of his sleigh-runners. A Roumanian cavalry officer happened to be passing; the peasant, who knew no Russian, with cap in hand, bowed before him, and asked him (in his native Roumanian): "Please, Sir, do you know Moldavian?" The officer jokingly replied: "No, old fellow, I don't know Moldavian, but you know Roumanian." "No, sir," replied the peasant, "I don't know Roumanian." Then the officer asked him what he wanted; and when the Bessara-

bian told him he needed a new runner, the officer directed him to a near-by blacksmith shop. So, remarks Senator Fala, they understood each other, though the one knew no "Moldavian," and the other no "Roumanian"! One can draw a comparison with American English and Canadian French, though the difference between Bessarabian Roumanian and that of the Old Kingdom is far less striking; but there is an old-fashioned character to the diction and the pronunciation, and many Russian words (especially connected with government) have made their way into the language. Hanesh, e. g., remarks (p. 61): "In Bessarabia we never heard the verb 'a cadeà,' and when we met it in the passages used in the readers our pupils were studying in Kishineff, we had to explain it by 'a picà' " (curiously enough, exactly the contrast between "to fall" and "to drop" in English). All Roumanians enjoy the speech of a cultivated Bessarabian; and I remember with great pleasure the address of the Bessarabian priest, Fr. Russul, at the blessing of the corner-stone of the new school in the Russian village of Tsariceanca-de-Sus (Akkerman); I never heard the language spoken with greater crispness and distinction, and his Russian was also admirable. The Bible is an excellent master of style, particularly in Roumanian, where the Bible trans-

lations play the part of both the King James Version and Shakespeare.

There seem to have been few schools in Moldavia at the period of the annexation of Bessarabia, as there were few in most rural districts of Eastern Europe in general. The monasteries and parish priests were under obligation to teach; and there was in Kishineff a school for the children of boyars and merchants. The new Metropolitan, Gabriel Banulesco-Bodoni, opened a theological seminary in Kishineff in 1813, stipulating that there should be taught as first and indispensable, Russian; then Roumanian, as the predominating language of the country; and then Latin, in order to enrich their vernacular. There was a professor of Roumanian in this seminary till 1867. We know from the preface to a Roumanian grammar printed in Kishineff in 1819, that it was destined for use in the seminary of Kishineff "and the other schools in Bessarabia." Such schools, preparatory to the seminary, were in existence in 1819 in Hotin and Akkerman, and in the next decade we find parochial civil schools in Kishineff, Baltz and Bender. Indeed, the intermediate boys' school of Baltz celebrates its centennial on May 7, 1928.

Alexander I was greatly interested in the Lan-



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THE HOTIN CASTLE

castrian method of teaching, by wall-charts; and as a result of his visit to Bessarabia in 1818, he issued orders to have the system introduced there. The first Lancastrian school was opened in Kishineff in 1824; and some of the wall-charts in Roumanian, of which hundreds were printed, have come down to us. In 1833, the first district lycée was opened, and Roumanian was taught there till 1867; in 1866 the State Council decided that Roumanian should no longer be taught in course, "since the pupils had a practical knowledge of it." By 1912, there were in Bessarabia 7 classical and 4 scientific lycées for boys, carrying preparation to the university stage, and 13 lycées and 4 gymnasia for girls. There were also a government normal school, two art schools, one school of music, one of viticulture, one technical school, three agricultural schools and two secondary commercial schools—all in Russian, of course. Only 45.5% of the teachers had a higher degree; 45.4 had what we should call a high school education, and 9% a grammar school education.

After the disappearance of the Lancastrian schools, which did not long outlive the Czar whose enthusiasm had founded them, as the governmental public schools outside of Kishineff did not teach Roumanian, the boyars in 1841 petitioned

the government to have classes in Roumanian established in them; and in 1842, Roumanian was admitted as a subject in Baltz and Hotin; but here too, it disappeared in the sixties.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SURVIVAL OF ROUMANIAN

Rural schools in Bessarabia had a strange origin. The tolerant Moldavians had given asylum to the Russian heterodox Lipovans; and when Bessarabia became Russian, the orthodox clergy felt it was their duty to give proper religious instruction to the children of these schismatics. In 1835, the country clergy in Olonetz were ordered to give free instruction in their homes in reading, the catechism, church prayers, etc.; and in 1837, Bishop Demetrius extended this provision to all Bessarabia. But the rural priests did not know Russian; and Demetrius issued his instructions in 1842 in Roumanian, stating that the priests must give "elementary instruction to boys in the Moldavian language, since the Moldavian villagers have need of teachers to teach them to read Moldavian, and for this reason they are giving their children for instruction to private lay teachers, who undoubtedly are unable to give the Moldavian youth instruction in that Christian disposition and spirit which is prescribed." Demetrius reports that in 1844 there were 326 such elementary



schools, conducted by priests; in 1845, there were 346 instructors, and 5177 pupils. These voluntary schools struggled along till the days of Bishop Paul (1871), who dissolved all Roumanian schools. Governmental rural schools do not appear except sporadically till after the Crimean War; in 1855, with a population of a million, there were in Bessarabia 89 rural lay schools, with 2120 pupils. In 1911, with a population of two and a half millions, there were 1522 schools, with 72,000 boys in attendance, and 29,000 girls, a proportion of four children in school to every hundred inhabitants. The average school year was 160 days. In the country,  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the boys aged 7-14 went to school, and  $\frac{1}{8}$  of the girls. About  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the rural teachers were women; they were much better educated than the men teachers, of whom 63% had had only a grammar-school education.

In consequence of the Crimean War, Russia was forced by the Treaty of Paris to give back part of Southern Bessarabia to Moldavia (now part of Roumania). This was the counties of Cahul, Bolgrad and Ismail, and the mouths of the Danube, covering 18,288 square kilometers, with over 125,000 inhabitants, and 94 Orthodox churches. This territory remained Roumanian 22 years. Its population was largely foreign—Bulgarian, Gagautz, German; and its progress during those

22 years gives some indication of what may now be expected for Bessarabia as a whole. Just as in 1918, the Roumanians found few schools in proportion to the population; but when Russia reannexed this region in 1878, there were a classical lycée at Bolgrad, a gymnasium at Ismail, four city high schools and 121 country district schools, with some 8000 pupils altogether. And this influence lasted. Hanesh tells an anecdote illustrating this, in his "Scriitorii Basarabeni" (p. 31). In 1917 he met in Kishineff a Russian officer who spoke pure contemporary Roumanian, not the old-fashioned "Moldavian" current in Bessarabia; but on being asked where he came from in Roumania, the officer replied that he was a Bessarabian from Ismail, and that they all spoke such Roumanian there.

As a result of this system, the native Moldavian majority for a hundred years had no higher school destined to its education in its own language, and for fifty years not a school of any kind in which its language was even taught! Most extraordinary is the discussion in the Russian Duma in 1911, in connection with the proposal, in Article 16 of the bill dealing with primary education, that in localities where the population was Polish, Lithuanian, German, Tartar, Esthonian, Lett, Armenian, Georgian, etc., instruction in their mother tongue

might be granted in government schools, in case of formal petition by the commune or by a group of parents. A Bessarabian Peasant Party deputy, Gulikin, not a Moldavian but a Russian (one of the schismatic Lipovans), moved to have the Moldavians included in the list of peoples with this privilege. Other Bessarabian deputies—Father Ghepetzky, the wealthy land-owner A. Krupensky, and Sholtuz—protested; and another, the anti-Semite Purishkevitch, cried out: “If you give the Moldavians the right to have schools in their mother tongue, you should give it to the Kirghises, the Buryats, the Ostyaks and other savage tribes.” And by their votes the proposal was squelched.

Naturally, this system resulted not in acquisition of Russian by the Moldavians, but in their almost complete illiteracy in any language. According to the latest full Russian figures for Bessarabian literacy (1897), 82% of the male population was unable to read and write, and 96% of the women! In urban centers, the proportion was 57% and 78% respectively. Of all the nationalities in Bessarabia, the Germans had the highest percentage of persons able to read and write—63%; next came the Poles, with 55%; the Jews, with 50% men, 24% women; the White Russians, 42% and 11%; the (Great) Russians, 40% and

21% ; the Bulgarians, 31% and 6% ; the Turks (Gagautzi) 21% and 2% ; the Ukrainians, 15% and 3%—and the Moldavians, half the population of Bessarabia, 10.5% of the men, 1.7% of the women! A century of the Imperial Russian school administration can hardly have advanced these Moldavians at all.

The preservation of Roumanian as a literary language at all in Bessarabia is due primarily to the Church; and there too the Imperial Government took a hand, and endeavored to make the Church an instrument of Russification. That was all the easier, in that Russians and Roumanians both belonged to the Eastern Orthodox Church; where Russia had to struggle with a different church, as in Poland, the task was far harder. And yet in Bessarabia their efforts with the Church met with similar unsucccess to that in the schools. Their school policy, instead of teaching the Roumanians Russian, landed them perhaps deeper in illiteracy; and the like church policy led to an estrangement between the Roumanian peasant and the Russian priest and church, resulting in a peasantry largely without religion, as elsewhere in Russia—one of the most striking phenomena brought to light by the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Government. As was well said by Ambassador Paléologue (*Revue des Deux Mondes*,

1922, 543), quoting Napoleon's "Un archevêque, c'est aussi un préfet de police": "the Russian clergy was a sort of gendarmerie, paralleling the military gendarmerie."

Of the Bessarabian peasants' eagerness for schooling and the printed word in their own tongue, I had ample evidence while in Bessarabia; it was delightful to see their pride in the new school buildings, constructed of the soft limestone, full of fossil shells, which underlies so much of the country. Even with a pitifully inadequate budget, the Roumanian government is putting up schools all over Bessarabia; everywhere the peasants help with contributions of labor, materials and money. I have already referred to the dedication of the new school-house at Tsariceanca-de-Sus (Akkerman); the Russian peasants of this village, of about 5000 people, had had no school in town under the Russians, but used the cramped facilities of the school in the lower town (Tsariceanca-de-Jos), a couple of miles away. A reverent and radiant crowd thronged the foundations and the surroundings of the school while Fr. Russul read the scriptures, delivered his eloquent speech, led the children's choir, prayed for the school's success, and blessed the corner-stone—all in Roumanian first, and then in Russian. Then the priest, superintendent of schools and

teachers, invited guests and village dignitaries, about 100 in number, adjourned to the building used as a temporary school. Long tables had been laid there, covered with everything proper to eat in Lent; it looked quite like a church supper at home, except for the abundance of wines, brandies and vodka. We began with caviare and an extraordinary variety of fish, fresh, salt, smoked, pickled, canned, cold with mayonnaise, and what not, with beans and other vegetables, white, whole wheat and rye bread, puddings of various sorts; as the assemblage thawed out, the priest called on the Prefect to make a speech; he was mercifully short and to the point, but others indulged the fondness of both Russian and Roumanian for oratory; underlying all, however, was faith in the school and education as the best solution for Bessarabia's troubles.

Moisiu, in his "Shtiri din Basarabia de astăzi" (pp. 103-104), has characteristic anecdotes of fifteen years ago, when the Bessarabian peasantry were just awakening. "In several Bessarabian churches I have seen the faithful besieging the priest at the end of services, begging him with tears in their eyes, and some even on their knees, to let them take and read the number of the 'Luminătorul' (The Light, a religious periodical in Russian and Roumanian, which

started in January 1908) from which he had read the sermon that morning. The priest usually gave it out to one of the leading men in town, and made out a list of those who should read it, in order; nobody could keep it more than two days. And these readings in Moldavian were genuine functions; crowds of all sorts of people thronged the house of the reader, and could never get enough of listening to the 'articles in our Moldavian.' . . . It will be hard for me to forget the joy of some Bessarabian peasants when I gave them a copy of the magazine 'Nashe Obedinenie' ('Our Union,' in Russian) of June 12, 1911, in which (surreptitiously, to all appearance) among the 32 pages were smuggled, on pp. 16-19, five articles written in Moldavian. . . . They read them and reread them time and again. They were written in the conversational language which they themselves used; and they all exclaimed: 'Now the Russian teacher says that the Lord doesn't allow Moldavian to be written down on paper, and look how nice it sounds here on paper in our language.' "

Hanesh well says (p. 39): "The unity of the Roumanian race in the trials of its early days, was maintained thanks to the shepherds. Passing with their flocks over the Carpathians and the Balkans and the broad Danubian plains, the Rouma-

nians in the pastoral stage kept in constant touch with one another, spread and preserved the same language and the same ways. In time, part of the Roumanian race became farmers, part (after the founding of the Roumanian principalities) settled down as business men and officials, but part still remained shepherds, carrying on the same manner of life as their forebears of a thousand years before. Even today, these shepherds follow the same paths from the mountain to the plain, and the plain to the mountain, and continually cross the Baragan, the Dobrudja and Bessarabia. Everywhere in this latter province, if you ask people if they ever had Roumanian books under the Russians, they will tell you that besides church books, they had what the Transylvanian shepherds brought in." Arbore in his book on Bessarabia, and Moisiu in his, list the trashy but popular stuff the shepherds imported, and which the Russian police frequently confiscated. A young Bucovinan friend of mine, whose grandparents had a Bessarabian estate near Czernowitz, used in his boyhood to visit them there summers; and he was greatly impressed with the thoroughness with which the Russian customs inspectors searched for Roumanian books in his baggage. But there was laxness on other frontiers, even at Odessa; and a certain number of



Roumanian books and periodicals straggled into Bessarabia even in periods of severe repression.

Sixty years after Bessarabia had become Russian, we have this striking testimony from Batiushkoff: "Up to 1871, when Bishop Paul came to the episcopal chair, in some monasteries and churches divine service was held in Roumanian. As soon as Bishop Paul had ascended the eparchial throne at Kishineff, he directed that in those monasteries where hitherto Roumanian had been used in the services, both Russian and Moldavian should eventually be used, and that schools should be opened in the monasteries, in which the young friars should learn Russian. With all these provisions, we have personal knowledge that in many monasteries divine service continues to be carried on in Moldavian, and that the only part sung in Russian is the 'Miserere.' As a fitting excuse for this insubordination, some Moldavians have raised the objection that since the country people do not know any Russian at all, they consequently do not follow divine service held in that language. We can bear witness that not only in the remote interior of Bessarabia, where the people are solidly Moldavian, but in Kishineff itself we have come across Moldavian peasants who did not know one word of Russian. This fact cannot be explained by any separatist tendency, but merely

and alone by the Moldavian peasant's inability to learn and to develop, as well as by his aloofness. However it may be, this ignorance of the language is not to be taken as a bar to the introduction of Russian into the church services. If we want to keep the Russian population from being Roumanized, if we want to save Bessarabia from being the object of Roumanophile ambitions and agitation, and if on the other hand we want to form an organic union with Russia, then we must hasten to utilize our schools for the purpose of changing (let us hope) half these Moldavian peasants into Russians." (pp. 172-3).

## CHAPTER XI

### RUSSIFICATION OF THE CHURCH

Bessarabia, like other parts of the Roumanian territories, had many important convents and monasteries (13 for monks, 7 for nuns), when taken over by the Russians. These establishments, at their best, were not merely religious centers, but also centers of educational activity, particularly as they generally owned great estates. Much land was also owned by monasteries west of the Pruth, and even outside of Roumania. The secular clergy also had great privileges; they were exempt from all state taxes, from the vineyard tax up to 50 vadras of wine (over 160 gallons) for an archpriest and 30 for a priest; from the tax on sheep up to 25 sheep for an archpriest, 15 for a priest; and from the tax on bees, honey being an important Bessarabian product. The boyars were bound to give the clergy free plow-land, enough to sow 11 pounds of grain on; free meadow-land—eight fălci (nearly 10 acres) for a priest and 6 for a deacon; and enough pasturage for 16 head of cattle for a priest and 12 for a deacon. They were also free from interference at

the hands of either the boyars or the civil authorities.

The first Metropolitan of Bessarabia was a very remarkable man, Gabriel Banulesco-Bodoni (see pp. 68, 71). Born in 1745 at Bistritz in Transylvania, and thus a Roumanian, he studied at Kronstadt (Brashov), Buda-Pesth, Kieff, Mt. Athos, Smyrna and the Isle of Patmos; became a seminary professor and director; then Archbishop of Yecaterinoslav, Metropolitan of Kieff, and in 1808, Metropolitan of Moldavia. He was a most energetic builder; we have seen how he established the Theological Seminary in Kishineff; he found 750 churches in Bessarabia, and added 200 to the number. He knew his clergy, and though a zealous servant of the Imperial Government, realized that Russification must be a long and slow process; meanwhile the necessary reforms must be accomplished with the use of their native tongue. So in 1813 Gabriel petitioned the Synod for permission to open a Roumanian and Russian printing-establishment in Kishineff. He pointed out that since his transfer from Jassy to Kishineff, he had discovered that both churches and monasteries lacked not merely spiritual books in general, but even the books necessary for divine service; the only Moldavian church printing-establishment was in Jassy, and had not been able

to meet the demands, so that a large share of the service-books in Bessarabia came from Transylvania, while it was hard to get books from Kieff for the few Russian churches in Bessarabia.

While awaiting permission, he himself translated into Roumanian a prayer-book, a catechism, and two other service-books, and evidently made his business preparations, for the Synod approved his proposal on May 4, 1814, and on the 31st the establishment was already in operation. This church publishing house was of the utmost importance to the inarticulate Roumanian peasantry for the preservation of a national consciousness and their mother-tongue. And the Metropolitan lost no time. In 1815 he brought out his first book—a Liturgy of some 200 pages, well printed, on excellent paper; and others followed at short intervals. Scandalized at the scarcity of copies of the Bible among his clergy, he corresponded with the newly formed Russian Bible Society at St. Petersburg, and at their request, sent them copies of two famous Roumanian versions of the Bible—that printed in 1688 at Bucharest under Sherban Cantacuzene, and that of Blaj (Blasendorf) in Transylvania of 1795—recommending that they use the latter. In a letter of Jan. 26, 1816, Prince Golitzin, President of the Society, informs Gabriel that they are using

the Blaj Bible, and that Prince Ypsilanti and Counselor Matthew Krupensky are correcting the proof; he wishes however that Gabriel would send him some educated person well versed in Roumanian, to assist, and that Gabriel would himself revise the proof. Gabriel's reply confesses that he has nobody in the eparchy of Kishineff "who really knows Moldavian grammar and spelling, though practically everybody here used both to speak and write Moldavian." So, as he was shocked by the numerous mistakes which the distinguished proofreaders had failed to correct, he undertook personally the revision of the proofs; he did however send up to St. Petersburg, in February 1817, an archimandrite, Varlaam Cuza, educated at the monastery of Dobrovatz in Moldavia, who corrected the Old Testament, the New being already printed.

In 1819 this great Bible was finished; the eparchy of Kishineff gave a copy to every priest on his consecration, while the New Testament was sent to every archpriest, with instructions to have every priest in his district buy one. Gabriel kept insisting at St. Petersburg that the Moldavians should not be "derided and belittled," pointing out that "in hard times, when the French were in the heart of Russia, the Turks along the Danube and the Pruth, when their emigration could not be

prevented by force of arms, since, through the treaty with the Porte, the inhabitants were free to go where they wished," they nevertheless remained. In his sermons and addresses to the peasants, he promised them that they would be happy under Russian dominion; and the Czar promised him, in his letter of Apr. 1, 1816, that "at the first, temporarily, as an experiment, he would leave the local laws in operation, and send trusted officials to investigate and do away with, evils and abuses."

Thus at the start there was an effort to keep up Roumanian culture among the clergy and their parishioners, side by side with a more powerful effort at Russification by the importation of Russian priests and the installation of Russian seminaries for the Moldavian students. Gabriel's successor, Demetrius Sulima, had worked with him as his vicar from 1811 to 1821, date of Gabriel's death; and through his incumbency of 23 years, he kept up this double function—Russification, together with the preservation, to a certain degree, of Roumanian culture. Irinarkh Popoff, who succeeded him (1844–58), neglected the Moldavian printing-house, and tried by every means to get theological students from Russia, but unsuccessfully; even in 1858, of the 24 archpriests and 879

priests in Bessarabia, only 14 archpriests and 152 priests had had a seminary education; and services were held in Kishineff itself in Roumanian as well as Russian. We even find a priest named Muranevitch complaining to the consistory that the peasants of Comrat did not understand his preaching in Russian, and understood Roumanian better, although they are Bulgarians (Gagaoutz) and talk Turkish. In fact, Roumanian is one of those languages which expand continually at the expense of their neighbors; the Bessarabians have a rhyme illustrating this:

Tată rus', mamă rus',  
Dar Ivan, moldovan.

(Father Russian, mother Russian, but Ivan, the son, is Moldavian.) This explains in part the Russian fear that their peasantry in Bessarabia would be Roumanized. Roumanian has always been a *lingua franca* in that part of the world—a great advantage for the new country of Greater Roumania, since only about 5% of her population do not talk Roumanian, and every member of the Roumanian Parliament understands it—the only Parliament, perhaps, of the Succession States, where every member of the Parliament understands the language in which the proceedings are



carried on! In one of these Parliaments, about one-fifth of the members never have an idea of what is being said in the sessions!

The same tolerant policy was pursued more or less under Irinarkh's successor, Antonius Socotoff (1858-1871); but with Paul Lebedeff (1871-82) begins a period of violent Russification. In 1874, the old exemption from service in the Russian army, a Bessarabian privilege from the start, was removed; schools and civil administration cast out Roumanian altogether; and Lebedeff attacked the monasteries, where Roumanian services had been peacefully going on all this time. He installed Russian schools in the monasteries, replaced Moldavian superiors and priests with Russians, and in 1872 was able to boast that all church records were being kept in Russian alone. When, in 1878, lower Bessarabia, which had been returned to Roumania after the Crimean War, again became Russian, he set a limit of two years within which the Roumanian priests must learn Russian or leave. He was promoted to be Exarch of Georgia, where his employment of the same energetic measures of Russification led to an uprising in which one of his protégés, Rector Tchiudetzky of the Tiflis Seminary (his former Inspector of the Kishineff Seminary) was killed; and the Imperial Government sent him off to



A Bessarabian COUNTRY CHURCH

Kazan. As a result of his closing Moldavian churches in Bessarabia, for which no Russian priests could be found, 340 Bessarabian churches remained without spiritual heads.

The church printing establishment had been closed since 1882. But Russian made little headway among the great mass of the Bessarabian people. The children who learned a little in the schools—and few had the chance to go to school—speedily forget it.

A favorite story illustrating this, tells of a Ruthenian priest in a Moldavian village, who discovered, after commencing the service, that he had forgotten his prayer-book. He could quote the prayers by heart, in the Church Slav, but not the gospels. Undismayed, he repeated from memory in their place a famous poem of the Ruthenian poet Kevchenko, “Dumi moi, dumi,” (thoughts, my thoughts), to the entire satisfaction of his hearers, who understood not a word, either of the Church Slav or any dialect of Russian.

Bishop Lebedeff made one significant commentary, in the course of a tour of inspection: “Priest N., 37 years old, is a graduate of the Seminary, but he has so degenerated in his Moldavian parish that his Russian is already atrocious.” And by the time of Bishop Jacob Pyatnitzky (1898–1904),

the situation had changed so little that he wrote the Holy Synod on March 23, 1900: "In many parishes of Bessarabia the orthodox population is composed mainly, often exclusively, of Moldavians, who know only Moldavian and do not understand in the least Church Slavonic or Russian, even in the conversational form. Russian religious literature, in the shape of leaflets and brochures, is altogether inaccessible to these people. But the Moldavians also are thirsty for religious instruction, for Christian counsel and comfort through the printed word. The need of Moldavian literature with which to satisfy the thirst of the orthodox Moldavians, is great. It is true that there are Moldavian books available, printed over the border in Roumania. But the language of these editions differs somewhat from the language spoken by the Moldavians in Bessarabia, and besides, they are printed with Latin characters, impossible or hard for readers here to decipher." In view of this, the Synod granted him permission to reopen the church printing establishment for such edifying literature, in Roumanian with parallel Russian text, and without; and in 1905, the Synod permitted the new Bishop, Vladimir Sinkovsky, to print Roumanian gospels, psalters and other works—in the Cyrillic

characters, of course, abandoned over a generation before in Roumania proper.

With the Russian Revolution of 1905, Bessarabia also breathed more freely; and on Oct. 20, 1906, in the presence of Governor-General Kharuzin and two Russian Bishops, there was inaugurated a new Moldavian church printing establishment in Kishineff. But a wave of reaction followed the Revolution; and the new Bishop, Seraphim Tchitchagoff, a former army officer, at once (1908) set out to crush the renewed use of Roumanian. In 1912, Seraphim made an interesting report on the situation, connecting the use of Roumanian in the churches with the political separatist movement, which he considers headed by the Jews of Kishineff, who wish union with Roumania. Among the Moldavians, he says, this movement "comes from their fear of losing their language and their church singing, and secondly, from the realization by the priests that the people still do not know Russian at all; the schools have turned out an insignificant percentage of pupils who are able to read Russian; the great mass of the inhabitants do not understand the Church Slavonic. For that reason when the service was carried on in Slavonic, the Moldavians attended church without comprehending; then they began

to lose the habit of going to church, and finally they have completely ceased developing religiously, and have begun to degenerate into vice and superstition.”

Seraphim had to combat this latter, in the extraordinary movement headed by a Moldavian monk (John Tzurcan, from near Soroca) named Innocent (Inochentie). He was an arch-monk in a monastery at Balta (till recently, capital of the Soviet Moldavian Republic, in the Ukraine), and his powerful religious harangues to the peasantry in their mother-tongue were supplemented by what they believed to be a miraculous power of healing disease. His fame spread through the Roumanian peasantry of Bessarabia, Podolia and Cherson, and Balta became in 1910–11 a Moldavian Lourdes, with shelters on every side for the invalids brought for his ministrations. At first his monastic superiors encouraged him; but then the government became alarmed at the Moldavian character of the enormous crowds which gathered around him. He was transferred to a monastery north of St. Petersburg; but hundreds of peasants in Bessarabia sold their belongings and went up there to be with Innocent. He was again transferred, this time to a monastery on an island on the White Sea, from which, after the Revolution, he returned to Balta, where he died

in 1920. But the "Innocentist Movement" still persists in Bessarabia, having fallen into the hands of charlatans who persuade the peasantry to sell their effects and prepare for the approaching end of the world; one such "pastor" was arrested in April 1926, just after consecrating a new meeting-house at Budeshti, near Kishineff.

We have an interesting diagnosis of this movement from the pen of a well-known nerve specialist, Dr. Yacovenco, in which he paints the conditions in Cherson, Podolia and Bessarabia which encouraged the rapid spread of Innocentism (Innokentievshchina): "The abuse of liquor and poor food on the one hand, spiritual darkness and the low level of intellectual and moral development on the other, taken together, produce a weakening of the organism, an exaggerated irritability of the nervous system, and such instability that when powerful new exciting factors operate, there arises a nervous disease. . . . We are forced to point out the slight intellectual development of the Moldavians, their proneness to superstition, and their lack of schools. . . . In great overgrown villages of 10-15,000 people, there are only one or two schools, and those in Russian, whereas the Moldavians do not mingle with the Russians, and do not know the Russian language. In their ignorance they are very credulous, and take as

gospel all they hear, and particularly what comes to them from the church and in their own language. The passionate addresses of the Moldavian arch-monk pierce deep into their spirits; they come at his call to purify their souls through prayer and fasting.”

After this portrayal, the reader will realize with what enthusiasm the Kishineff Theological Seminary was reopened, on November 8, 1926, as a Roumanian educational institution. It began with 454 students, of whom 19 were women.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE ZEMSTVO AND ITS FUNCTION

This brief sketch must suffice to give an imperfect picture of the failure of the Russian Imperial Government in Bessarabia, as regards school and church. On the material side, a century of development, mainly peaceful, was somewhat more successful. A few hundred miles of road were built, and some five hundred miles of railway. But here also too little was done for the Moldavian peasantry. Most of the boyars were merged into the Russian nobility, and gradually lost their early zeal for the language and institutions of their ancestors. Their interests lay in Odessa and St. Petersburg, and by the end of the nineteenth century they differed little from the great land-holders in other parts of the Empire. In 1911, there were inscribed in the list of Bessarabian nobles 468 families, of which only 138 belonged to the old Moldavian aristocracy; 198 had been raised to the nobility from the military or official class; the remainder came from other parts of the Empire, the majority (64) being Polish, who found here a more congenial atmosphere than in

Poland. The Bessarabian nobility in recent years had their representatives in the Imperial Senate and Duma; they took the leading part in what local institutions were allowed under the Imperial régime, particularly the zemstvos, a characteristic Russian institution, introduced into Bessarabia some 55 years ago. In each of the seven districts—Akkerman, Bender, Baltz, Kishineff, Orhei, Soroca and Hotin—there was a district zemstvo; each elected five deputies to the provincial zemstvo. The district zemstvos were composed of delegates elected by three colleges. The first college consisted of nobles owning 250 to 500 acres of land, or paying taxes on property of equal value; the second, of land-owners not of the nobility; the third, of the peasantry, electing one delegate for each country-circuit. In the seven district zemstvos, there were 127 delegates of the first college, 36 of the second, and 64 of the third, the total number of electors being restricted—about 3500 altogether. The delegates were elected for three years, and met once a year for ten days. They had charge of special taxes; of the district's land and other possessions; of roads and bridges; of the post and telephones; of hospitals and charitable institutions; and of mutual benefit organizations. They were also consulted by the government in connection with government sup-

## THE ZEMSTVO AND ITS FUNCTION 113

plies; government care of orphans, dependents, insane, etc.; public health and diseases of livestock; public instruction; and aid for agriculture, industry and commerce.

The zemstvo formed a corporation with the right to buy and sell property, to make contracts and to sue and be sued in court. The government had the right to revise or veto its decisions, and several government officials were members, including a representative of the Church. The Marshal of the District Nobility presided. Each of these district zemstvos elected five members for the Provincial Zemstvo, which met every year for 20 days. This zemstvo included in addition each of the district Marshals of the Nobility; the presidents of the executive committees of each district zemstvo; the government provincial Secretary of Agriculture, and the Superintendents of the Imperial Domains and Crown Lands; and representatives of the Church. The Marshal of the Bessarabian Nobility presided. They elected an Executive Committee, composed of the President and five members. The Provincial Zemstvo had charge, for the whole province, of the same general activities as the District Zemstvos; but in addition it had the right to issue ordinances; to supervise mutual insurance organizations; to sanction loans; to fix the date and place of fairs; to

regulate the campaigns against noxious animals and other pests, like the frequent plagues of locusts; and to fix the amount of damages in case of harm to provincial property. Over the zemstvos was a supervising committee, under government auspices; and the decisions of the zemstvos generally required government sanction; the governor had a broad veto power, including even that of the zemstvo personnel.

Altogether, this was an easy-going patriarchal institution, which in some generations or centuries might have become a genuine representative governing body; but it operated less than two generations in Bessarabia, and made no considerable success except in the fields of hospitals, charitable organizations and mutual benefit and insurance organizations, which had a flourishing growth. We possess, in Prince Urusoff's account of his impressions as Governor-General of Bessarabia some twenty years ago, an interesting critique of the system. "The zemstvo was representative mainly of the great land-owners; the peasants had no importance. Its activities lacked perseverance and continuity. The tendency was to do everything on a grand and luxurious scale, as with the Museum and Hospital of Costiugeni. After building them, they discovered the difficulties of maintenance. In general one noticed the lack of



(From an old print)

BIVOUAC OF A CHARCOAL CARAVAN, AUGUST 5, 1837

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serious thought which characterizes the Bessarabians. They cut first, then they measure, and after measuring they discover they have cut too much." He remarks elsewhere in the book, with regard to the great land-owners: "In their homes on their great estates you find much luxury, but a lack of traditions and seriousness. I did not observe even an attachment to their homes; the estate was a source of revenue, passing from hand to hand. In general, the Bessarabian land-owner keeps for himself only his vineyard and a part of his land, and rents out the rest, largely to Jews. Ostentatious luxury, a fondness for city life, a desire to make much money and spend still more—these are the traits you observe in the Bessarabian land-owners, explaining their lack of traditions and moral fiber. . . . In Bessarabia, with its abundance of natural wealth, life is lazy and free from anxiety. The people are uneducated, well-off and mild-mannered, the land-owners are easy-going and fond of enjoyment; society has much tolerance for its own and others' weaknesses, loves ostentation and tries to keep on good terms with the administration; energy and character are rare, hospitality lavish, morals somewhat lax. Such, in broad strokes, is Bessarabia."

We hope that the reader now has some idea of conditions in Bessarabia, as the Russian Empire

nears its fall. In general, the nineteenth century was a period of comparative peace for this province, so tossed about in the past between Tartar, Turk, Pole and Cossack. To be sure, war traversed the province three times during the Russian occupation. From 1828 till 1834, Russia administered Moldavia and Wallachia, and the Pruth barrier disappeared for six years. The Crimean War, of 1853-56, restored to Moldavia the Danube Bessarabian districts of Cahul, Bolgrad and Ismail, which became part of the Principality of Roumania in 1859. In 1877, Russia and Turkey again came to war, and the new Roumanian army saved the Russians from annihilation at Plevna; but although the Czar had solemnly promised Prince Charles of Roumania that in return for the passage of his troops across Roumanian soil, he would respect Roumanian territorial integrity, the diplomats of the Treaty of Berlin handed back these districts to Russia, ostensibly for compensation in the Dobrudja, and they were reincorporated with Russian Bessarabia.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN DECAY

It is now necessary to give a brief sketch of general conditions in Russia, as suddenly illumined before the world by the Russian-Japanese War, and the Russian Revolution of 1905. We have seen in Bessarabia an ignorant peasantry, an easy-going aristocracy, a feeble school system, a church remote from the spiritual needs of the masses, a timid and inefficient local government, and an autocratic, corrupt and highly bureaucratic administration. The war and the revolution made clear to an astonished world that these same conditions prevailed through the whole structure of the Russian Empire. Russia was nothing but an inarticulate, fermenting mass of human beings—over nine-tenths of them farmers—exploited by a small group of land-owners, bureaucrats (civil and religious) and concessionaires. Clever agitators took advantage of the conditions after the Revolution of 1905, to increase the discontent, which was partly due to the social and economic situation of the moment, partly already fostered by the earlier revolutionaries. The rudimentary



political life engendered by the Duma manifested itself in so-called parties, which could of course find little support in the illiterate peasantry who made up the overwhelming bulk of the Russian people. In general, the parties representing different shades of socialist opinion had behind them the great mass of such farmers and workmen as were at all "politically-minded"; and their well-justified invectives against the exploitation of the agricultural and industrial proletariat, found a wide sympathy, not only in the downtrodden mass but among the intellectuals. Everyone knew how corruptly and inefficiently Russia was governed; nor did even the army learn its lesson from the war with Japan. The visit of a French military mission, shortly before the World War, discovered a disquieting lack of railway lines and equipment, of made highways, of telegraph and telephone lines, of cavalry mounts, etc., which resulted in a French military loan of \$100,000,000 a year, for five years. The budget balanced, to be sure, but with the help of French loans. The main source of revenue was the tax on alcoholic beverages, chiefly vodka, which brought in about \$500,000,000 net revenue per annum; vodka has made the Russian people perhaps the most drink-sodden on the earth. I remember one Russian village in Bessarabia where the Roumanians are appalled at the

conditions (and the Roumanian peasant also drinks more than he should). This village, of 7000 people, contains 2000 Bulgarians, who are relatively sober. It had only 2 churches, when the Roumanians took it over, and one school; but it was full of "blind pigs," selling liquor illegally; and under the transitional Roumanian system of government supervision, there were 23 authorized liquor saloons (and nearly 40% of illegitimate births). Such conditions in country villages seem to have been general in Russia, and form today a new and disquieting problem to the Roumanians in Bessarabia.

The situation was everywhere complicated, just as in Bessarabia, by the fact that in this huge empire, the Russians themselves were in a minority, and had made themselves hated by their efforts to impose their language and their ways upon the other peoples subject to them. Russians formed only about 44% of the population; Ukrainians about 17%, Poles 6%, White Russians 4½%, Jews 4%, Kirghizes 3.2%, Tartars 3% and so on down; the Moldavians formed about 1%. Count Witte in his Memoirs admits that to obtain a homogeneous empire, there was only one sensible measure to follow: "abandon our frontier provinces, for they will never accommodate themselves to a policy of violent Russification. But our

monarch will never take such a measure into consideration. On the contrary, not contented with including within our boundaries Poles, Finns, Germans, Letts, Georgians, Armenians, Tartars, etc., we have been overwhelmed with desire to annex territories inhabited by Mongolians, Chinese, Koreans.”

But the Balkans and Constantinople were a nearer goal. In 1904, war with Germany and Austria for this prize seemed imminent; Witte tells us that Grand Duke Nicholas was actually appointed to lead the armies against Germany, and Kuropatkin against Austria. When the Great War broke out, Russia's war aims were well understood in the western chancelleries. Russia was to obtain the Bucovina, all non-Russian Poland, East Prussia, part at least of Persia, and parts of Asia Minor, including a port at Alexandretta. In the spring of 1915, the Allies formally promised Russia the Bosphorus, Constantinople and the Dardanelles.

It is possible that without the war, Russia might have absorbed more foreign territory; but with the enormous social and economic dislocation of 1914-17, disintegration was inevitable, and the wonder was that it delayed so long. German successes virtually blockaded Russia early in the war;

her railways proved inadequate to the combined needs of the army and the civil population; agricultural production having fallen off 10–15%, the grain supply became insufficient; the depreciation of the ruble roused huge discontent among the officials and the factory workers. By 1917, the number of operatives in St. Petersburg had risen from 200,000 in 1914 to over 400,000—largely peasants off the soil. Everyone was discontented with the disastrous progress of the war and the incompetence of the government. Late in the winter of 1916–17, matters came to a climax; huge crowds filled the streets protesting (Feb. 25); and when the traditional remedy was used and the troops were ordered to fire on the crowd, they refused. Insubordination and desertions had become so common that the army leaders decided to give exemplary punishment to these troops; but when the penalties were announced, they revolted (Feb. 27) and killed their officers. The news spread like wildfire; and without any previous preparation, so rapidly that no politician had time to utilize the movement, the Russian Revolution of 1917 was taking place. On March 2 and 3, the Czar and his brother successively abdicated, and the Russian Empire was left without an emperor, or responsible head of any kind. The Duma con-

stituted a nucleus of government; but on Feb. 27 extremists had already formed a Soviet (council) of Workers and Soldiers, and its power grew rapidly.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE REVOLUTION COMES TO BESSARABIA

This sudden freedom seemed to the Russian people like an awakening from a long nightmare. At last they could themselves decide the tremendous problems so bungled by the Imperial Government. The first provisional cabinet, under Lvoff, though conservative (Kerensky was the only Socialist, and a moderate one), had everyone's good wishes; but its lack of real power was immediately evident, and only the tolerance of the Executive Committee of the Soviet, an abler and bolder group of men, kept it from falling. Furthermore, the new government made a fatal mistake at the outset, in trying to continue the war. The Russian Revolution had come up from the people, and their instinct told them that they had nothing to gain but everything to lose by a continuance of the war. A strong faction in the Soviet was for immediate peace; the manifesto of the official organ of the Soviet demanded that the government approach the proletariat of all the warring countries, to induce them "to rise

against their oppressors and stop the bloody carnage immediately." Even in the Soviet, however, there were important leaders who were undecided; Lenin and Trotzky, pacifists, carried on the negotiations for the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk; but when they saw the German demands, as we now know from the testimony of Robins and Sadoul, Trotzky made every effort to obtain Allied and American help for the continuance of the struggle—help withheld because of the fatal Allied conviction that the old Russian régime could be restored if the Soviet government was left to its fate.

On May 2, the divergencies between the Soviet and the bourgeois cabinet had become so serious that a new government was formed, with Kerensky as Minister of War. He visited the front, and was astonished to find Russian regiments concluding separate peace with their German adversaries, on the basis of no annexations and no indemnities. Nevertheless he loyally tried to carry out the long-planned advance on the Russian front (July 10). Meanwhile (July 3–5) there had been street fighting in St. Petersburg, and Lenin and Trotzky had first showed their power. The Russian attack having failed, Kerensky's situation became more and more untenable; he tried to make himself personal head of the army, but the

soldiers were now entirely out of hand; and in October, Kerensky gave up and fled. Russia was now in complete governmental, military, financial and economic chaos. Two of the ablest men the world has ever seen, Lenin and Trotzky, seized the power, on the basis of a proletariat soviet government, and succeeded, in spite of every possible obstacle, in creating a strong and ruthless government, which has restored order and put the currency on a gold basis, however reprehensible we may consider its other activities.

So much for the general course of the Russian Revolution. Now we must turn our attention to its manifestation in Bessarabia, where it resulted, as in so many Russian provinces, in the creation of a new and independent state—the Bessarabian Moldavian Republic.

Russia mobilized for the war twelve per cent of the population of Bessarabia; the remainder, by a supreme effort, maintained the cultivation of grain. Roumania remained neutral till 1916 (see my "Greater Roumania," pp. 164 on); then Roumanian and Russian troops fought side by side, as at Plevna. With the breaking of the Roumanian front, Bessarabia was flooded with troops; but in its quiet remoteness, it was not till the arrival of an official telegram from St. Petersburg on March 5, 1917, that the Bessarabians suddenly learned



that the Imperial Government had ended, and that, like all the rest of Russia, they were free. The functionaries met at Kishineff and wired their allegiance to the new provisional government; but other factors immediately came on the scene. On March 22, a local Soviet of Workers and Soldiers was formed at Kishineff, with outside elements (not a native Bessarabian among them). The local professional syndicates, including the bakers, waiters, etc., held their meeting. The forms of government maintained their continuity at the start through the zemstvos; but they were handicapped by the preponderance of the great land-owners in their selection and in their ranks. Beside them sprang up local executive committees, in which were many soldiers and other outside elements. Soldiers and representatives of the so-called "democratic organizations" made their way also into the zemstvos. The city and local police were replaced by an improvised militia. The prisons were emptied by a general amnesty. It was decreed that soldiers should be addressed as equals, that they should salute their officers or not, as they pleased, that they could enter political organizations. Freedom was rampant.

The Provisional Government was worried over the possibilities of the Bessarabian situation.

They knew that the well-known anti-Semites Krushevan and Purishkevitch were in Kishineff, and that the Krupenskys and other wealthy and reactionary land-owners were important in the province, while they had no confidence in the Moldavians, whom they suspected of coquetting with the Roumanians. So they had agitators for the Revolution sent out through Bessarabia; Kerensky ordered to Kishineff one of his most trusted lieutenants, Sokoloff, who arrived on May 19, the very day of a congress of the peasants of Bessarabia. As a consequence of his report to headquarters, there was sent a group of 40 agitators from St. Petersburg, with orders to fight anti-Semitism, reaction and separatism, and to make the principles of the Revolution triumph; evidently the Bessarabians were not sufficiently enthusiastic. This commission arrived on June 1. Not long afterward the venerable "Grandmother of the Revolution," Mme. Breshko-Breshkovskaia, visited Kishineff, and was given an overwhelming welcome. Erhan, one of the St. Petersburg delegates, in his address to her, said: "The intellectuals are asleep, they are doing nothing for the Revolution." "Babushka" interjected: "But what of the 40 commissioners?" and Erhan had to confess that the local authorities would not furnish them with transportation, and that some had been

arrested in the villages. She visited the Moldavian Teachers' Convention, and urged them to spread the principles of the Revolution in Roumanian among the peasantry. Indeed, there was a sudden flowering forth of Moldavian literary effort, in the translation and adaptation of revolutionary and even communistic pamphlets.

The Church was least of all affected in Bessarabia, largely due to the tact and conciliatory efforts of the Archbishop, Anastasius. He opened a gathering of the clergy, teachers and village authorities, on April 19, which was the first representative convention. This favored a democratic republic, the self-determination of peoples, and a united Russia. It pronounced for various church innovations, like the election of the priests by their parishioners as in Transylvania, and church autonomy, with a metropolitan and two bishops, who should know Moldavian. Soon afterward, the church authorities allowed priests to use their hearers' language, Moldavian, in chants, prayers and sermons. At last the majority of the Bessarabians were allowed to worship God in their own tongue.

On May 28 was held the Congress of Moldavian Teachers, 350 in number. This was a remarkable occasion. Both Russian and Roumanian were used in the speeches. The delegates were ad-

dressed by a delegate of the St. Petersburg Soviet of Workers and Soldiers, for Russia one and indivisible; a delegate of the Seventh and Eighth Armies, and of the 300,000 Moldavian soldiers in the Russian Army; others representing the Ninth Army, the Moldavians in the Russian Navy, and the Soldiers' Soviet of Odessa. Sentiment was overwhelming for the printing of Roumanian school-books, with Latin, not Cyrillic, characters, and for the establishment of a Roumanian school system. There was no question of separating from Russia, and only one member voiced a fear that Bessarabian Moldavian autonomy would sooner or later mean union with Roumania.

Meanwhile the Russian Army on the Roumanian front (see "Greater Roumania," p. 203) was rapidly disintegrating; and the Bessarabian civil authorities were completely at sea. The official report of the Government Commissary at the end of June 1917, says: "The situation in Bessarabia is melancholy, the villages are disorganized, here and there are agrarian disorders; . . . the administrative machinery is destroyed, the existing organizations are weak." The Provisional Government, realizing that the agrarian question was, for the peasants, the chief theme of the Revolution, had sent out instructions "to create land commissions, and turn over to them the land which

was not utilized by the owners." Already in March, in the district of Soroca, the peasants took possession of land belonging to the monastery of St. Spiridon in Jassy, which was leased to a sugar-beet company. In April, similar occupations of land by the peasants took place in the districts of Kishineff, Soroca, Orhei and Baltz; bands of soldiers began plundering wine-cellars, with resulting disorders; and later murders, as of S. Murafa, Hodorogea, and the Rev. D. Baltaga, all well-known in the Moldavian nationalist movement, opened people's eyes to the serious condition of affairs. The authorities were powerless. Luckily, the peasants confined themselves to taking land not already planted.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE FIRST REVOLUTIONARY CONGRESS

The Peasants' Congress of May 20, 1917, in Kishineff, after an initial secession of the Russians because the Moldavians insisted on the use of Roumanian as well as Russian, and a later secession of the Moldavians when their candidate for the presidency failed of election, finally passed a series of resolutions, the gist of which was that the land, the forests and the subsoil belong to the people as a whole, and should be apportioned among the present inhabitants without compensation to the temporary owners. The second Peasants' Congress was held at Kishineff on Aug. 27, with delegates from Kerensky in the persons of John Inculetz and Erhan. Inculetz, as a leading Social Revolutionary, outlined the procedure to be followed; the land was to be under the control of the Russian Constitutional Assembly, and administered by local commissions, supervised by the Pan-Russian Land Commission. He proposed also that bread should be sold at the old price—half that recently fixed by the government, whose money was rapidly depreciating—while all

industrial products should be sold at half-price. Orator spoke after orator, both Russians and Roumanians being able to speak indefinitely; but the Congress could come to no definite decisions except in the election of delegates to the Soviet of Soldiers, Workers and Peasants; among them we find the names of Inculetz, Erhan and Halippa (once imprisoned in Moscow for his membership in the Social-Revolutionary Party).

Among the various parties organized in 1917 in Bessarabia, the National Moldavian Party soon took a leading place. It dates from April 3; in its manifesto we find that its aims included: a firm foundation for the civic and national liberties gained by the Revolution; a new constitution for Russia which should guarantee these national liberties; the widest possible autonomy for Bessarabia in matters administrative, judicial, religious, educational and economic; a Provincial Diet (Sfatul Tzării, lit. Council of the Country; Sfat is derived from the Old Slav *sŭvietŭ*, council) to legislate for local needs, with representation in the All-Russian Parliament; all local administration and court procedure to be in the language of the locality, Russian to be used in communications with the central seat of government; the schools to be conducted in the local language, with Russian as one of the subjects for study; school attendance

to be compulsory; the Church to be autonomous, and Moldavian to be used in the services; Bessarabian soldiers to serve only in Bessarabia, and Russian to be the language only for the high command; introduction of foreign colonists, as in the past by the Russian Imperial Government, to be stopped, and the land to be given to the local peasants who have none, or not enough; Bessarabian revenues to be used for local purposes; and the Moldavians beyond the Dniester (in Podolia and Cherson) to have the same rights and privileges. Such declarations for local home rule we find in all the border provinces at about the same period. The party committee consisted of V. Stroescu, honorary president, the "Grand Old Man" of the Moldavians, who had devoted his fortune to promoting Roumanian culture, especially in Transylvania; P. Gore, President; P. Halippa, Secretary; V. Hertza, Vice-president; Gen. Donici, the Rev. Gurie, P. Grosu, T. Ioncu, Minciună, V. Bogos, V. Cazacliu, Corobcean, Gh. Buruiană, S. Murafa, A. Botezat, Gropa, I. Pelivan (a former exile to Siberia for his opinions), I. Codreanu, Gafencu and the Rev. Partenie. The party spread rapidly through Bessarabia, and meetings in sympathy were held in Odessa and elsewhere. The Moldavian soldiers in Odessa organized, under Capt. E. Catel, and paraded through Odessa in the great



manifestation of May 1, N. S. Similar organizations of Moldavian soldiers were promptly formed on the Roumanian front, the Western front, in Sebastopol, Nicolaeff, Cherson, Yecaterinoslav, Kishineff and Bender. Since these soldiers were peasants in great majority, they at once attacked the agrarian problem; and since this was the most important feature of the Russian Revolution, we must interrupt our narrative to summarize the land situation in Bessarabia.

We have seen that the Imperial Russian Government bestowed large tracts of land upon its favorites, and gave other tracts to colonists, mainly German and Bulgarian. Other great areas were held by the government itself, the Crown, the villages, and especially the Church and the monasteries. In 1868, the Government carried through a generous measure of distribution of land among the peasantry, which seems to have been quite satisfactory for the needs of the time. But these farms were constantly subdivided and sold, so that by the twentieth century there was again in Bessarabia a large body of landless peasantry. The last pre-war Russian statistics show that of the 3,834,824 desyatins of arable land (a desyatin is 2.7 acres) in the districts of Orhei, Soroca, Baltz, Hotin and Kishineff, 54.3% of the land was owned

by the large land-owners; in Akkerman, Ismail and Bender, 33%. The foreign colonists were mainly in the last three districts, while the first five were pretty solidly Moldavian. The farms of the Moldavian peasants were also smaller; in Orhei and Hotin, over 93% of the peasants' farms were under 5 desyatins; in Soroca, 87.6%, Kishineff 80%, Baltz 41%, Bender 14% and Akkerman only .4%! From 1902-11, the peasants worked over 55% of the land per annum, the great land-owners 45%; the peasants cultivated 83% of their land, the great land-owners 60%; but the intensive measures possible on the large farms gave them a 10% larger yield. Nearly 100,000 carloads of agricultural products, mainly grain, were exported annually. As we have seen, Indian corn occupied 30% of the land under cultivation, barley 23%, winter wheat 18%, spring wheat 15.5%, rye 9%, oats 3% and potatoes .6%. There were 20,000 desyatins in orchards and nearly 100,000 in vineyards, of which over half are in the district of Akkerman; the average production of wine was 12,500,000 vedras, over half the entire production of the Russian Empire. Tobacco was also largely cultivated, though on a descending scale; stock-raising, wool and fisheries were all of importance. Home industries lack the importance which they

have in Roumania, since the peasants have lost their picturesque costumes under Russian rule. Once covered with thick forests, Bessarabia has become almost completely deforested; 1917 was a particularly disastrous year, owing to the need of local wood for fuel, and perhaps there are not more than 150,000 acres of woodland left in Bessarabia today.

There was then a large body of landless peasantry in Bessarabia, and a huge extent of arable land not under cultivation. Nationalization of the land and free distribution of it among the peasantry was the key-note of the Russian Revolution. This resolution, passed by the Moldavian soldiers and officers on the Roumanian front, meeting in Jassy Oct. 10-12, 1917, is characteristic: "All the land of Bessarabia becomes the property of the people, and passes without compensation into the hands of those who individually work it. Private property in land is abolished for all time. A final decision in the agrarian question falls within the scope of the Constitutional Convention. Colonization with foreign elements in the future is inadmissible, since there is not enough good land in Bessarabia for the needs of its population. Until the Constitutional Convention meets, the agrarian question is to be handled in accordance with



GROUP OF Bessarabian PEASANT WOMEN

the decisions of the Pan-Russian Peasants' Congress of May 25th, and the Bessarabian Peasants' Congress of Aug. 20th, whose decisions are to be put into force by the local agrarian commissions."

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE UKRAINE ENCROACHES

While the Bessarabians were securing their autonomy, the Ukrainians were organizing their independent government, under the expert guidance of Grushevsky, a former Austrian subject. The Russian Provisional Government was too weak to oppose them; the Ukraine became an autonomous state, with its Rada (Congress) and administration. It sought at once to lay its hands on Bessarabia and incorporate it into the Ukraine. The Bessarabians protested, and took part in a Congress of Russian Peoples called by the Ukraine authorities at Kieff Sept. 8-14, 1917. There were representatives of the White Russians, Great Russians, Ukrainians, Esthonians, Letts, Lithuanians, Poles, Jews, Georgians, Roumanians, Cossacks, Tartars and Turcomans. The Roumanian (*sic*) delegates were Prof. St. Holban of the Odessa Moldavian Soviet; Gr. Dascal, sailor, from the Kishineff Soviet; Prof. T. Ioncu, of the National Moldavian Party; V. Cazacliu, of the Moldavian Students' Organization; I. Codreanu, of the Peasant Soviet; Capt. V. Cijeveschi of the Moldavian

Soldiers and Officers. The Congress, after long discussions, decided unanimously that Russia should be a federative democratic republic; every separate nationality should have autonomy; each people should have its constitutional convention; each nationality should have the right of using its language in local administration, schools, etc., and all languages should be on a parity; Russian should be the common language for intercommunication; the local language should be used in church, school and courts; the Russian Democratic Federative Republic should be proclaimed at once, and the army nationalized by the leaders of the democratic revolutionary organizations; there should be a national council in the department of foreign affairs, representing all the nationalities in the republic, and similar representatives should compose the Russian delegation to the Peace Conference. In his speech, Prof. Ioncu reminded his audience that Bessarabia had enjoyed virtual autonomy from 1818 to 1828, under Alexander I, and was resuming that autonomy.

Meanwhile, the situation in Bessarabia, like that of Russia in general, was approaching complete chaos. The army was melting to pieces; Bessarabia was being traversed and ravaged by thousands of deserters. Efforts to send regiments to the front resulted in episodes like the following, which

we summarize from the official testimony, not to a court martial, for they were abolished, but to an "extraordinary commission for information," composed of members of the Odessa Moldavian Executive Committee, two officers from the Council of Soldiers and Officers of Odessa and the Roumanian Front, the President of the Bessarabian Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasants, Soldiers and Workers, the President of the Kishineff Ukrainian Military Rada (Council), and Comrade Adamovsky, Counsel. Their researches established that on June 6 and 7, twelve companies with about 3000 soldiers, ostensibly going to the front from Odessa, disentrained at Soldăneshti (Orhei); there they got drunk and began a campaign of smashing windows and robbing shops. Setting out for Orhei, they plundered and drank en route; at Sârcova, they beat up a sergeant who protested, and began assaulting women, one of whom, a girl of fourteen, in Trifeshti, died two days later, after being maltreated by ten soldiers. They straggled into Orhei, which they terrorized for several days, the President of the local Soviet not allowing the local militia to carry cartridges, for fear of civil war; on June 9, their numbers were increased by other soldiers going toward the front from Kishineff; these joined forces with them, and plundered especially the wine cellars, so



that Orhei was filled with Russian soldiers lying dead drunk in the streets. As the Soviet President still refused to take any measures, the Aide to the District Commissary, on his own responsibility, sent to Kishineff, and a company of Cossacks, with a machine gun, restored order.

This is merely a sample of what was going on all over Bessarabia and the rest of Russia near the front. In "Greater Roumania," p. 221, I give instances of clashes between deserting Russian soldiers and the Roumanian troops, in Roumania itself. The peasants also, not to be outdone in exploiting the privileges of liberty, seized the property of individuals and monasteries, under the guidance of Russian deserters, who explained that under the Revolution, all private property had disappeared, and all belongings were to be apportioned among them and the peasants. At the monastery of Hârjauca, for instance, a crowd of soldiers and peasants came beating on the door with guns; first they demanded the keys to the wine-cellar, and drank or carried off all they found there; then they divided up the horses, cows and sheep of the monastery. After looting private estates, they frequently burned houses and barns to the ground. The Congress of Bessarabian Soldiers, in October 1917, organized a "Bessarabian Army"; but this was promptly demoralized by

the clever activities of a Bolshevik, Cătărau, just released from prison, and could not be depended on. The Russian Supreme Command in Jassy authorized the formation of sixteen militia units and a sort of gendarmerie, but this was pitifully inadequate.

Friction continued with the Ukraine; and one of the leading Moldavians, V. G. Cristi, succeeded in making his way to St. Petersburg and interviewing several of the ministry, including Kerensky himself, just in time to prevent their recognizing the Ukraine inclusive of Bessarabia. They told him that his was the first voice raised against this step; and the Minister of the Ukraine, Vinitchenko, remarked that he had come up bringing ten provinces in his brief-case, but was returning with only nine. This new state of the Ukraine, recognized by the Provisional Russian Government in the summer of 1917, now cut Bessarabia off from the central Russian administration, and left it isolated. None the less, Bessarabia was full of emissaries of the Bolsheviks, who were now rapidly growing in power; and they fought the Moldavians desperately, accusing them of being counter-revolutionists and "separatists" (i. e., in favor of union with Roumania). It is true that some of the most conspicuous members of the Moldavian National Party were men of

means, and probably a majority believed in private property, though in favor of distribution of at least the unused land among the peasantry; and a certain proportion, especially of the students, were in favor of annexation to Roumania. Bessarabia's sudden isolation, and the increasing anarchy, increased the strength of both these factions. The Bolsheviks, realizing this, started a campaign of terrorism, and the evening of Aug. 20, some 200 Russian soldiers, with Bolshevik leaders, seized and murdered two of the most conspicuous Moldavian leaders, A. Hodorogea and S. Murafa, in Kishineff itself. Other attacks took place in the smaller towns and continued through the autumn and winter; one of the most outrageous, in which the Moldavian leader P. Fala was left for dead and his home completely destroyed, occurred near Baltz in January 1918.

## CHAPTER XVII

### ORGANIZATION OF THE DIET

In this atmosphere of demoralization took place the preparations for the elections scheduled for the Russian Constitutional Convention, in which 12 delegates were to represent Bessarabia. The old Russian political parties of the True Russians (Anti-Semites, whose chief representative in Kishineff had been Krushevan, a clever journalist) and the Centre, being Czaristic, had disappeared. The Cadets, largely composed of land-holders, had lost their influence also. The Social Revolutionaries and the Social Democrats had comparatively few adherents, and the Jewish Bund and the Zionists drew largely from them. Five tickets were put up: the Constitutional Democrats, headed by Prince Urusoff, the former governor, with a list of land-owners, officials and professional men; the Social Democrats, largely Jewish; the Moldavian Coöperatives (as elsewhere in Russia, the coöperative societies had become very powerful; among their candidates were V. Chiorescu, T. Ioncu, I. Pelivan, G. Buruiană, P. Fala, I. Codreanu and M. Minciună); and the Peasants'

Party, whose list included Inculetz and Erhan, who had come down from St. Petersburg, P. Halippa, S. Arman, Gh. Pântea and I. Berlinsky. The elections were to be held on Nov. 12-14; but they had to be postponed a fortnight; and in the chaos which then prevailed, with thousands of disbanded Russian soldiers voting like the natives, they were held only in part, and the results were never fully tabulated.

Meanwhile, on Oct. 20, there was held in Kishineff a Congress of Moldavian Soldiers from all Russia, representing some 250,000 soldiers. Their deliberations resulted in the passage of a series of resolutions, as follows: Russia is to be a federative democratic republic; Bessarabia to have territorial and political autonomy, and her own army, with an immediate temporary organization of 100 mobile cohorts to combat the prevailing anarchy; a Provincial Diet (Sfat Tzării) to be organized; all the land, whether belonging to the Church, the monasteries, the state, the Crown or private individuals, to be taken over without compensation and divided among the peasantry; no further colonization in Bessarabia; instruction in the local language to be free and obligatory; and contact to be maintained with the Moldavians east of the Dniester, who are to have ten seats in the Provincial Diet. This Diet is to have 120 depu-

ties, apportioned as follows: 84 (70%) to the Moldavians, 36 to the minorities. 44 were to be elected by the Congress, 30 by the peasants, 10 by the Moldavian organizations, 36 by the minorities. This number was later increased to 135, and then 150. These figures were based on estimates of the population of Bessarabia as consisting 70% of Moldavians, 14% Ukrainians, 12% Jews, 6% Russians, 3% Bulgarians, 3% Germans, 2% Gagautzi (Turks of Christian religion), and 1% Greeks and Armenians. This appears to be a fairly accurate guess; the official Russian figures, which the Moldavians considered as inaccurate and padded, set the Moldavian proportion considerably lower, as about one-half. Such figures are misleading in all European countries of mixed nationalities, since the census enumerator generally has instructions to count everyone who understands the state language as being of that nationality, no matter what his everyday speech may be.

The Congress appointed also a Committee to organize the Diet, with V. Tzantzou, President, and some twenty members. The total membership of the Diet was now 150, 105 of whom were Moldavians. The original 135 were divided into 28 groups: representatives of the soldiers (38); of the Moldavian sailors at Odessa (3); Moldavian

soldiers at Novo-Georgievsk (1); soldiers on the Roumanian front (3); the Peasants' Soviet (28); Central Committee of the National Party (6); Roumanian Cultural Society in Bessarabia (1); Moldavian Professional Association (2); Moldavian priests (2); Coöperative Union (3); Cultural League of Moldavian Women (1); Moldavian Students (3); Ukrainians (10); Germans (2); Poles (2); Bulgarians and Gagautzi (4); Greeks and Armenians (2); the Zemstvo of Kishineff (2); the Press (4); the Zemstvo of Soroca (1); the City Government of Kishineff (3); that of Orhei (1); the railroads (3); the Israelite Bund (6, one woman); the Popular Socialists (1); the Social Democrats (1); the Judiciary (1); and the Bar (1). In the change to 150 members, several were added from the zemstvos and the cities of the various districts, and the government service of posts, telegraphs and telephones. The various organizations elected their representatives, wherever possible; but the Diet was mainly appointive, and would not be considered a duly representative body in normal times in any western country. It must however be remembered that Bessarabia was in a state of anarchy already, shortly to be complicated by the fall of Kerensky, which left Russia with no responsible government whatever for the moment. He was succeeded by the Bolsheviks—

numerically at that time an infinitesimal minority of the Russian people, and not recognized as legitimate rulers by the Bessarabians. The Diet at any rate provided a welcome substitute for constitutional government, and indeed considered itself at the start a transitional body, preliminary to the establishment of a definite régime. The rapid march of events, combined with the ability and determination of several of its members, made of it a genuine governing organ.

On Nov. 21, 1917, the Bessarabian Diet formally opened its sessions, with 95 members present. At the service in the Cathedral, the Russian Bishop Gabriel surprised and pleased the gathering by holding the service in Roumanian; and he delivered a brief allocution in Roumanian when the session opened in one of the high school buildings. The Diet elected John C. Inculetz president. Inculetz, who was one of the Roumanian Commission visiting the United States in 1926, came of a peasant family in the village of Rezeni, near Kishineff. He was a privat-dozent in Physics at the University of St. Petersburg when Kerensky selected him as his emissary to Bessarabia, to intensify the work of the Revolution in that backward and reactionary province, as the Provisional Government considered it. He had hitherto not collaborated with the National Moldavian Party, in view of the



pro-Roumanian tendencies of several of its leaders; but news of Kerensky's fall had just arrived, so that he now felt free to work with them, but for an independent Bessarabian republic. In his opening speech, he reminded the delegates that Russia was now a prey to anarchy, the only escape from which lay in the immediate organization of each Russian province. Anarchy was under way in Bessarabia; the Diet must guard the province against it, and provide also for the meeting of a Constitutional Convention for Bessarabia. It must distribute the land to the peasants; it must take steps to secure provisions, for there was no bread in sight after January, and the constantly increasing hordes of demobilized soldiers would plunder the country. Politically, the Diet must keep closely allied with the Russian Democratic Republic. "It is absolutely evident," he said, "that rumors of a so-called 'Roumanian orientation' are misleading and without any foundation in fact. . . . Separatism in Bessarabia is non-existent, particularly separatism toward Roumania. Here there is only a handful of men who turn their looks across the Pruth. The paths of Bessarabia merge into the paths of Russia, for Russia is a country much freer than Roumania." It is worth noticing that the Diet, in spite of the irregular manner of its assembling, received nota-

ble marks of public recognition—the blessing by the Bishop; salutations from the President of the Bench and of the Bar; the presence of four sub-commissioners of the province; of Erhan and Inculetz, official representatives of the Soviet of St. Petersburg and of the Provisional Russian Government, not yet formally replaced; of Mayor A. C. Schmidt of Kishineff, and of P. Sinadino, former Deputy in the Duma.

It is evident, in spite of Inculetz' statements, that various of the Moldavians expressed from the start a hope of national union with the mother country, Roumania. On the other hand, the presence of militant members of the Russian revolutionary parties, the burden of whose speeches was Bessarabian coöperation in the salvation of Russia, ensured a thorough discussion of every possible manner in which Bessarabia might continue as a member of the Russian body politic. Those who impugn this Diet as unconstitutional must face the unconstitutionality of every other organ of legislation in Russia at that time. No Constitutional Convention had yet replaced the will of the Czar, hitherto the legal source of all power; and if we except Finland, all the other border provinces were governed by similar informal bodies—in Esthonia, the Provincial Council of April 1917, which declared itself the National

Council, sole sovereign authority in Esthonia, on Nov. 28; the Lithuanian "Tariba," which proclaimed the independence of Lithuania; the Ukrainian Rada of April 1917, which declared the independence of Ukraina, and made its separate peace with the Central Powers; the similar Rada of White Russia, at Minsk; and the National Councils in Armenia, Caucasia and Georgia, which announced their independence of Russia.

For completeness' sake I add a list of the members of the Diet, at the time of the final vote on union with Roumania, arranged roughly in Russian alphabetical order, and classed according to their vote; it is based on the lists of Pelivan (Chronology, etc., Appendix B) and Cazacu (Moldova, etc., pp. 240-245). I have marked with an asterisk the names of those who were in the Diet from the beginning, and have given such data about them (age, profession and county) as I could glean, so that one can judge of the character of the assembly; n. d. indicates that I have no information. Cf. also the list of signers of the protest of Nov. 20, 1918.

Voted for Union on March 27 (O. S.), 1918.

- 1 \* Alexandri, Neculae: 60, journalist, Hotin
- 2 \* Alistar-Bălan, Elena: 42, doctor, Akkerman
- 3 \* Buzdugan, Ion: 30, teacher, Baltz

- 4 \* Buiuk, Ilarion: 27, farmer, Orhei
- 5 Bivol, Neculae: 33, farmer, Kishineff
- 6 \* Budishtean, Ignatie: 30, farmer, Baltz
- 7 Bârca, Teodor: 24, teacher, Soroca
- 8 \* Bosie-Codreanu, Neculae: 32, engineer, Hotin
- 9 \* Botnarcuik, Shtefan: 43, farmer, Baltz;  
Ukrainian
- 10 \* Buruiană, Gheorghe: 33, coöp. official, Kishineff
- 11 Bârca, Teodosie: 23, farmer, Kishineff
- 12 Bogos, Vlad: 24, student, Kishineff
- 13 Bodescu, Vlad: 50, lawyer, Kishineff
- 14 \* Băltagă, Alexandru: 55, priest, Orhei
- 15 \* Vălutză, Ion: 24, student, Baltz
- 16 \* Grosu, Neculae: 27, student, Kishineff
- 17 \* Gafencu, Vasile: 30, farmer, Baltz
- 18 Galitzky, Simion: n. d.
- 19 Ghenzul, Vasile: 35, civil service, Kishineff (?)
- 20 Găină, Andrei: 33, farmer, Orhei
- 21 \* Gropa, Alexandru: 38, coöp. official, Baltz
- 22 \* Dragomir, Dumitru: 28, farmer, Akkerman
- 23 Dutkiewicz, Felix: n. d.; Pole
- 24 Dron, Dimitrie: 25, student, Baltz
- 25 \* Epuri, Boris: 36, civil service, Baltz
- 26 \* Erhan, Pantelimon: 34, professor, Bender
- 27 \* Zubac, Vitalie: 23, army officer, Ismail
- 28 \* Ignatiuc, Ion: 25, farmer, Kishineff (?)
- 29 \* Inculetz, Ion: 35, professor, Kishineff

- 30 \* Ioncu, Teofil: 32, civil service, Orhei
- 31 \* Crihan, Anton: 25, student, Baltz
- 32 \* Creangă, Ion: 24, teacher, Bender
- 33 \* Chiriac, Afanasie: 27, farmer, Bender
- 34 \* Cărăuș, Dumitru: 25, student, Soroca
- 35 \* Codreanu, Ion: 39, farmer, Soroca
- 36 \* Cazaciu, Grigorie: 26, student, Soroca
- 37 \* Caraiman, Anton: 38, farmer, Orhei
- 38 \* Cocârlă, Pavel: 24, artisan, Orhei
- 39 \* Costin, Ion: 35, lawyer, Kishineff
- 40 \* Chiorescu, Vlad: 30, coöp. official, Kishineff
- 41 \* Cazaciu, Ion: 48, civil service, Soroca
- 42 Cazaciu, Vlad: 29, student, Soroca
- 43 Lashcu, Vasile: 60, journalist, Kishineff
- 44 Mămăliga, Neculae: 38, gardener, Kishineff
- 45 Minciună, Mihail: 32, farmer, Orhei
- 46 \* Morariu, Anatolie: 23, farmer, Hotin
- 47 \* Morariu, Alexandru: 37, farmer, Hotin
- 48 \* Mârza, Dimitrie: 23, teacher, Hotin
- 49 \* Mare, Gheorghe: 36, professor, Akkerman
- 50 Măculețcu, Mihail: 56, farmer, Orhei
- 51 Mărchitan, Dimitrie: 32, farmer, Baltz
- 52 \* Neaga, Teodor: 37, professor, Kishineff
- 53 \* Năstasă, Gheorghe: 22, teacher, Soroca
- 54 \* Osoian, Constantin: 32, farmer, Baltz
- 55 \* Pântea, Gherman: 24, teacher, Baltz
- 56 Măndrescu, Vasile: 29, farmer, Orhei
- 57 \* Pelivan, Ion: 40, lawyer, Baltz
- 58 \* Palii, Eftimie: 37, gardener, Soroca

- 59 \* Păscălutză, Ion: 25, soldier, Baltz  
60 \* Picior-Mare, Petru: 30, civil service, Baltz  
61 \* Sinicliu, Elefterie: 22, farmer, Orhei  
62 \* Suruceanu, Neculae: 28, army officer, Kishineff  
63 \* Silistraru, Tim.: 23, army officer, Bender  
64 \* Zbierea, Kiril: 27, surveyor, Cahul  
65 \* Săcară, Nicolae: 24, professor, Kishineff  
66 \* Scobioală, Andrei: 32, professor, Baltz  
67 \* Spinei, Kiril: 34, farmer, Soroca  
68 Stavriu, Gheorghe: 35, farmer, Cahul  
69 \* Suruceanu, Teodor: 52, farmer, Kishineff  
70 \* Tudor, Gheorghe: 33, teacher, Baltz  
71 \* Tudos, Ion: 33, farmer, Baltz  
72 \* Turcuman, Grigore: 26, farmer, Soroca  
73 \* Uncu, Teodor: 34, civil service, Orhei  
74 \* Halippa, Pantelimon: 34, journalist, Soroca  
75 Hertza, Teodor: n. d.  
76 \* Tzurcan, Leonid: 23, civil service, Kishineff  
77 \* Tzantzu, Vasile: 35, teacher, Kishineff  
78 \* Cernăutzan, Neculae: 26, soldier, Hotin  
79 \* Ciornei, Neculae: 25, farmer, Cahul  
80 \* Cijevschi, Vasile: 37, army officer, Bender  
81 \* Ciorăscu, Vasile: 31, farmer, Kishineff  
82 Cernof, Nicolae: n. d.  
83 Sholtuz, Nicolae: 60, farmer, Soroca  
84 Stere, Constantin: 54, professor, Soroca  
85 \* Munteanu, Zamfir: n. d.  
86 Sucevan, Iacov: n. d.

Voted against Union

- 1 Balamez, Shtefan : 35, civil service, Kishineff;  
Bulgarian
- 2 Osmolovsky, Arcadie : n. d.; Ukrainian
- 3 Starenki, Mihail : n. d.; Ukrainian

Refrained from Voting

- 1 \* Almendingher, Philipp : 50, farmer, Akker-  
man; German
- 2 \* Bacsan, Zaharia : 49, farmer, Baltz
- 3 Buciushcan, Gavril : 29, teacher, Orhei
- 4 \* Budnicenko, Nikitza : 36, farmer, Baltz;  
Ukrainian
- 5 \* Brinici, Gheorghe : 30, farmer, Baltz; Ukrain-  
ian
- 6 Vizitiu, Eftimie : 37, farmer, Soroca
- 7 \* Gherman, Isac : 60, lawyer, Kishineff; He-  
brew
- 8 Garbuz (Harbuz), Ioan : 31, civil service,  
Kishineff
- 9 \* Grubsky, Andrei : Kishineff; Ukrainian
- 10 Diaconovici, Dragomir : n. d.
- 11 \* Dumitrashcu, Ion : 28, farmer, Orhei
- 12 Donico-Iordakesco, Serghie; Kishineff
- 13 Corali (Coval?), Vasile : n. d.; Ukrainian
- 14 \* Curdinovsky, Vasile : 46, professor, Poltava
- 15 Krivorukoff, Ivan : 42, workman, Bender;  
Russian

- 16 \* Kenigschatz, Eugen: 58, lawyer, Kishineff;  
Hebrew
- 17 Cuncev, Petre: 47, farmer; Bulgarian
- 18 Culava, Alexe: 43, farmer, Ismail
- 19 Kiriloff, Teodor: 37, lawyer, Ismail(?); Bul-  
garian
- 20 Lichtmann, Samuel; 60, civil service; He-  
brew
- 21 von Loesch, Alexander: n. d.; German
- 22 Luneff, Vladimir: 39, professor; Russian
- 23 Moldovan, Teodor: n. d.
- 24 \* Misircoff, Cristo: 43, professor, Bolgrad;  
Bulgarian
- 25 \* Nagorneac, Iacov: 39, farmer, Hotin;  
Ukrainian
- 26 \* Nikitiuk, Teodor: 35, surveyor, Cahul;  
Ukrainian
- 27 Popa, Ion: 28, farmer, Baltz
- 28 Ponomareff, Gheorghe: n. d.
- 29 \* Poliatînciuk, Petre: 36, civil service, Podolia;  
Ukrainian
- 30 Slutski, Moise; 62, doctor, Kishineff (?);  
Hebrew
- 31 Savenko, Mihail; n. d.; Ukrainian
- 32 Tziganko, Vladimir: 31, engineer; Russian
- 33 \* Iurcu, Constantin; 34, farmer, Hotin
- 34 Manitzin, Petre; 35, teacher; Russian
- 35 Mildov (Măldoc?), Dimitrie; n. d.; Bulgarian
- 36 Greculoff, Alexandru: n. d.; Russian



Absent from this Session

- 1 Bajbeuk-Melicoff: 45, surveyor, Orhei; Armenian
- 2 Ghertza (Hertza), Ioan; 34, farmer, Kishineff
- 3 \* Corobcean, Teodor: 37, coöp. official, Soroca
- 4 Landau, Gutman: 40, civil service; Hebrew
- 5 Novacoff, Anton: n. d.; Bulgarian
- 6 Rugina, Anton: n. d.
- 7 Sîrbu, Gheorghe; n. d.
- 8 Savciuc, Kalistrat: n. d.; Ukrainian
- 9 \* Stanevici, Teodor: 51, judge, Kishineff; Russian
- 10 Tzurcan, Alexandru: 32, farmer, Soroca
- 11 Ceornega, Ion: 40, farmer, Ismaïl
- 12 Steinberg (Schönberg?), Mendel: n. d.; Hebrew
- 13 Tcepciu (?), Gheorghe: n. d.

## CHAPTER XVIII

# THE CREATION OF THE BESSARABIAN REPUBLIC

The first task of the Diet was to make a declaration of principle, voted on Dec. 2, 1917, to the following effect:

Moldavians and brother nationalities of Bessarabia!

The Russian Republic is in great danger. The absence of central authority, and disorder throughout the country, which is exhausted by its struggle with the foreign enemy, is bringing the whole republic to destruction.

In this appalling situation, the only way of salvation for the Democratic Russian Republic is for its people to unite and take their fate into their own hands, establishing their national governments within the boundaries of the countries in which they dwell. By virtue of this fundamental principle and having in view the establishment of public order and the confirmation of the rights secured by the Revolution, Bessarabia, on the basis of her historic past, proclaims herself, from this day forward, the Democratic Moldavian Republic,

entering into the structure of the Federative Democratic Russian Republic, as a partner with equal rights. Up to the calling of the popular assembly of the Moldavian Republic, which is to be elected by all the people by direct, equal and secret vote, after the system of proportional representation, the highest authority of the Democratic Moldavian Republic is the National Diet (Sfatul Tzării), constituted by the representatives of all the democratic revolutionary organizations, of the different nationalities, and of the zemstvos and the town administrations. The Executive Power in the Democratic Moldavian Republic is lodged in the Council of General Directors, responsible only to the National Diet. In view of the desires of the peoples living in the territory of the Moldavian Republic, the National Diet contemplates:

- 1) calling in the shortest possible time the Popular Assembly of the Moldavian Republic, chosen by universal, direct, equal and secret vote, according to the system of proportional representation.

- 2) distributing to the people all the land, without payment, on the basis of equitable utilization.

Pending the enactment of a law regulating the transfer of the land to the working classes, and in order that there may be no disorders, and no waste of the riches of the soil, all the land not actually worked by the owner in person, together with the stock and the farm tools, shall pass under

the charge of land committees, newly elected on a democratic basis. The National Diet shall enact detailed ordinances regarding the manner in which the land is to pass under the charge of the committees, and how they are to regulate the working of the land.

Forests, bodies of water, the riches of the sub-soil, experimental station land, nurseries, beet-sugar land, as well as vineyards and meadows belonging to the boyars (large land-owners), the monasteries, the Church and the Crown domains, and finally all the residences of the boyars, being the people's universal property shall pass into the charge of the General Land Committee of the Moldavian Republic.

3) organizing the task of supplying the people with food and commodities of first necessity, regulating the labor of the workers, raising their pay and establishing in all enterprises the eight-hour day, and constituting national control of manufactures and of revenues over all the territory of the Moldavian Republic.

The National Diet contemplates working out a system of measures regarding the demobilization of the armies and the war-factories.

4) establishing direct elections in the local self-governing institutions, not as yet elected, on the basis of universal direct equal secret voting, with proportional representation; and fully guar-



RUSSIAN (LIPOVAN) FISHERMEN

anteeing the normal course of these institutions.

5) the defense of all the liberties won by the Revolution, viz., freedom of speech, of the press, of belief, of thought, of union, of assembly and of striking, and guaranteeing the inviolability of the individual and his home, and insuring immediate justice for every people.

6) the abolition for all time of the death penalty in the territory of the Moldavian Republic.<sup>1</sup>

7) the securing of full rights for every nationality living on the lands of the Moldavian Republic, giving them personal, national and cultural autonomy.

8) the inauguration of efforts to instruct all the peoples of the Moldavian Republic, on the basis of autonomy and nationality.

9) the immediate formation of national regiments, of soldiers born on Bessarabian soil, for the defense of the national resources from rapine during the period of the army demobilization, and to deliver the country from terrible impending anarchy.

10) the adoption of measures for the conclusion of peace without annexation of foreign territory and without war indemnities, every people being entitled to decide its own fate; peace should be concluded by an understanding with the Allies

<sup>1</sup> The Kingdom of Roumania has always forbidden the death penalty.

and with all the peoples of the Federated Democratic Russian Republic.

Moldavians and brother peoples of the Moldavian Republic!

At this awful moment, when we are standing on the verge of the abyss, of anarchy, of the shedding of brotherly blood, of poverty, famine and cold, the High Council of the country calls you round about it, that you may exert all your powers for the decisive struggle, together with all the peoples of the Moldavian Republic, to support it with every effort, and to protect the Russian Constitutional Assembly. The Council calls upon the Moldavians and upon all the affiliated peoples of Bessarabia to labor valiantly for the common weal, establishing a new life on the foundations of freedom, justice and fraternity. Only thus shall we bring our country safely through, and keep the great Russian Democratic Republic from perishing.

Thus was born, on Dec. 2, 1917, at one of the most discouraging moments of the World War, and amidst general administrative anarchy, the Democratic Moldavian Republic, destined by its leaders to form a self-governing unit in the new Federated Democratic Russian Republic. Federation was actually proclaimed also by the Ukraine

and the similar Republics of the Don and the Crimea, and an effort was made to hold a meeting at Kieff for the drafting of a federal constitution. But the Bolshevik government at Petrograd was unfavorable, hoping for a complete communization of the new states; and events moved rapidly in Bessarabia itself. True, there was now a ministry, with Erhan as President, Ciobanu Minister of Education, Pelivan Foreign Minister, etc.; there was a militia, which bravely took part in parades on Dec. 6 and at Christmas; salutations were exchanged with the General Secretariat of the Ukraine, the Polish Army and what not. But messages arrived from all sides, from Cahul as well as Hotin, begging for troops to repress the looting which was going on everywhere; and with the conclusion of the Armistice on the Russian front, on Dec. 4, the troops began disbanding and returning home. "You can't stop armed bands with speeches," the President sadly reminded the Council on Dec. 13. These troops no longer recognized the authority of the Russian Commander-in-Chief on that front, Gen. Shtcherbatcheff, and proceeded to live on the country; roving regiments crossed Bessarabia on every highway, journeying leisurely homeward, and committing all manner of excesses. Oratory thundered in the Council,



but soldiers, supplies and money were needed, and the Council had none. There seemed no escape from an appeal for temporary aid from the Roumanian Army, to restore order.

## CHAPTER XIX

### ANARCHY IN BESSARABIA

From now on, the historian who tries to discover, and present, the real course of events, must throw up his hands in despair. Generations will probably pass before the publication of archives now secret will make clear the inner springs of action, in the events which now so rapidly succeeded one another. Today, one is dependent on statements, books and articles which are obviously biassed, and it is almost impossible to steer a middle course. Both Russians and Roumanians have published much outright propaganda; this often contains genuine documents and truthful statements, together with much wild exaggeration, like the following, on pp. 88-89 of "The Roumanian Occupation in Bessarabia: Documents," one of the publications (in English) issued by the so-called Bessarabian Delegation at the Peace Conference: "The intellectual level of the Roumanians scarcely exceeds that of the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands. . . . Roumania is a country so backward, it has civilization so inferior and a mentality so primitive that it is astounding such

a people could have reached the sill of the twentieth century and remain what it really is." Yet this same volume contains some useful documents. The best accounts I have found, from the Russian standpoint, are the articles of Mark Slonim, a Russian Bessarabian Social Revolutionary, and Ryabinin-Sklyarovsky; from the Roumanian, La Răspântie: Moldova de la Nistru in anii 1917-1918 (At the Crossroads: Moldavia on the Dniester in 1917-18), by D. Bogos, youthful Chief of Staff in the ill-fated Army of the Moldavian Republic, and Moldova dintre Prut shi Nistru (Moldavia between Pruth and Dniester), 1812-1918, by Dr. P. Cazacu, an admirably documented and well written work.

On one point all these accounts agree; that is, in execration of a certain Ilie Cătărău, whom the Russians characterize as a paid Roumanian agent, and the Roumanians as a Bolshevik agitator. He was the commander of the First Moldavian Regiment, and thus in charge of the armed forces of the new Moldavian Republic. His viewpoint is amply set forth in his reply, dated Nov. 27, 1917, to a request from the local military authority at Soroca for eight cohorts of his regiment with which to repress marauding troops—a request endorsed into a command by the General Military Commissariat; Cătărău answers that after dis-

cussion of the matter by the regimental committee, it was decided not to send the cohorts, since "the Moldavian Democracy, in the name of the soldiers of the Moldavian Regiment, understands that the way to stop the anarchy which has arisen in agrarian matters, is not to use military force, but to pass a clear and laconic (*sic*) law doing away with all the causes which give rise to fire and devastation." Rhetoric even in the military service of the Republic! During the war, I was on the Macedonian Front not long after the Russian regiments on that front had deposed their officers and formed soviets, debating every order from headquarters as if it were a simple proposal. The French and British had no sympathy with this procedure, surrounded and disarmed the Russians, and gave them their choice, either to work on the roads like prisoners of war, or join fighting units. Evidently Bessarabia was now face to face with similar disorganization, and the case called for immediate decision.

Complications were added by a formal order from the Ukrainian Rada for the complete disbandment of all troops, in view of approaching peace with the Central Powers. The Bessarabian Republic was invited to send representatives. The following are the instructions given to the Bessarabian delegates to the Peace Conference

of Brest-Litovsk; I translate them from the original Russian, in the facsimile which accompanies the vitriolic "Deux Ministres du Cabinet Roumain," one of the Krupensky "Bessarabian Delegation" publications (Paris, Jan. 15, 1920):

1) All the contracting parties shall recognize the Delegates as representatives of the Moldavian Popular Republic, having equal rights in the Conference.

2) The Delegation must insist on the inclusion in the preliminary peace project, of a compact guaranteeing full autonomy to the Moldavian Republic, in the boundaries of the former Province of Bessarabia, in force until the calling of the Popular Assembly of the Moldavian Republic, which must decide the further historic course of the country.

3) The territories of the Moldavian Republic, in the boundaries of the former Province of Bessarabia, are indivisible, nor may any part of the Moldavian Republic be alienated to the benefit of another government.

4) Until the meeting of the Popular Assembly, the Representatives of the Moldavian Republic stand absolutely by the platform adopted in the Declaration of the Sfatul Tzării of Dec. 2, 1917.

5) The Delegation recognizes the Soviet of

Commissioners of the People only as the government of Great Russia, and all dealings with the Soviet of Commissioners of the People are to be regarded from that standpoint.

6) The Delegation must insist on the installation of a direct wire from Brest to Kishineff, and after each session of the Conference, they must immediately present the state of affairs to the Council of General Directors.

7) All the items in these instructions are of an imperative (categoric) character, and may not be altered without consent of the Council of Directors.

Signed: Pres. of the Council of General Directors P. Erhan.

Pres. of the Delegation J. Inculetz.

Director General for International Affairs Pelivan.

There was now a Bolshevik Soviet in Kishineff; in November, the notorious Dr. Roshali, President of the Republic of Cronstadt, visited Kishineff as an inspector, and intensified Russian Bolshevik feeling against the Moldavians. The latter decided to send to Jassy for some Transylvanian troops to maintain order; but the Bolshevik sympathizers headed off each messenger. Transylvanian troops finally did arrive from Kieff, the night of Jan. 6; but they were attacked and dis-

armed by Bolshevik sympathizers. Local Bolshevik committees now arose all over Bessarabia, disregarding the Diet, whose lack of funds and of armed support made it more impotent every day.

The Ukrainian Rada, in view of this general anarchy, thought the moment propitious to annex tempting portions of Bessarabia, and their Premier Golubovitch notified the German High Command that both the north and south of Bessarabia were peopled mainly by Ukrainians and were dependent commercially upon Odessa; the Ukrainians sent word to the Austrians that they would proceed to occupy the line Ocnitza—Baltz—Rabnitz. Inculetz sent a telegram to Gen. Shtcherbatcheff, Russian Commander-in-Chief at Jassy, asking for troops for protection. Shtcherbatcheff, having no Russian troops available, turned the request over to his Roumanian allies, who had also received similar requests from Directors Codreanu, Pelivan and Secara. Russian writers blame Shtcherbatcheff for the loss of Bessarabia. "We know," says Slonim, in his article in the "Volya Rossiya," Apr. 15, 1924, p. 68, "who gave the Roumanians the idea of veiling the seizure of the country under the mask of 'defending the border from Bolshevism.' It was the Commander of the Russian Armies on the

Roumanian Front, Gen. Shtcherbatcheff. By indulging his naïve and light-minded hope of the salutary rôle of Roumanian intervention, Gen. Shtcherbatcheff helped the Roumanians seize Bessarabia. . . . He helped Gens. Prezan and Broshteanu, the future military chief of Bessarabia, mobilize a division for the occupation of a Russian province, indulging an illusory hope of 'utilizing Kishineff as a military base for a campaign against the Germans,' but the actual mobilization was carried out with the permission of the Germans. 'Ludendorff's staff,' remarks Gen. Denikin . . . 'already in late December 1917, proposed to the Roumanian administration the occupation of Bessarabia, and later offered Roumania for that occupation the right to keep some divisions on a war footing' (see "Greater Roumania," p. 223). Of course this was no new thought to the Roumanians, as Slonim would imply; the reincorporation of Bessarabia into Roumania had been a Roumanian hope from the outset, and before Roumania's entrance into the war, efforts had been made by Italy at St. Petersburg to secure the guarantee, on Russia's part, of the return at least of the Budjak. Naturally the Germans encouraged this ambition at this time, as a means of strengthening their own position in southeastern Europe, and of securing a much-



needed grain supply for the Central Powers; but it would be a mistake to assign so much importance to German policy in this matter as do the Russians. Ryabinin-Sklearovsky bears witness, through Gen. Shtcherbatcheff's son's notes, to the inevitable character of Roumanian armed intervention, and to the general conviction, even in Russian minds, that once in possession, the Roumanians would occupy Bessarabia permanently. It was universally recognized as an inevitable historic fatality.

The news that Roumanian troops had been asked for, roused great resentment among those who still clung to the hope of a Bessarabian state within the Russian Federated Republic. President Inculetz of the Diet, and President Erhan of the Council of Directors General, telegraphed, under date of Jan. 6, 1918: "Jassy, Roumanian Government. We protest against the introduction of Roumanian armies into the territory of the Moldavian Republic. We demand categorically the immediate cessation of shipments of troops, and the prompt recall of those troops already over the border. The introduction of Roumanian troops into Bessarabia threatens us with the horrors of civil war, which has already begun. The Russian troops must be allowed to pass freely without any hindrance." The Bolshevik Soviet

of Kishineff, in its indignation at the calling for Roumanian troops, put a price on the heads of the Moldavian Directors—Cristi, Pelivan and Codreanu—whom it held responsible for this action, and endeavored to dispossess the Diet of all power. Disorder increased; four pro-Bolshevist members of the Diet were murdered—Pantîr, Prakhnitzky, Tchumatchenko and Grinfeld. But when news came of the speedy approach of Roumanian troops, the Communists subsided, and after efforts to do as much harm as possible, the majority decamped and crossed to the other side of the Dniester.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE ROUMANIAN ARMY BRINGS ORDER

On the evening of January 13th, 1918, the Roumanian Army entered Kishineff. General Broshteanu and his staff arrived at noon of the 14th; and on the 15th, he was given a formal reception by the Diet. President Inculetz, in introducing him, reminded the deputies through what a crisis they were passing, and emphasized the assurance given him, that the Roumanian troops were in Bessarabia solely for the preservation of order and the safeguarding of the railway communications and army supplies and munitions. Gen. Broshteanu, in his address, bade his hearers banish any fears they might have of losing their newly won liberties. "I am bound to declare to you," he said, "that Roumania is herself in too difficult a situation to have any thoughts of conflict or conquest." Our only purpose, he went on, is to guard munitions, communications and the railways; but we have also brought you security. In every town through which we have passed, I have been told: the arrival of your army has given us the first restful night's sleep we have had in

months. We of the Roumanian Army hope that under our protection you will proceed to develop your Republic as you see fit. We do not wish to interfere.

With the arrival of the Roumanian Army and the assurance of order, all classes in Bessarabia except the Russian revolutionaries, breathed a sigh of relief. The murders of prominent Bessarabians during the previous few weeks—in the district of Orhei, MM. Cveatcovsky, Ducantoni, Mihalash, Marabute, Zenin-Creazcov, in Soroca, M. Butmi de Catzman, in Baltz, MM. Bantash, Roset, Anush, in Bender, M. Balutzel, in Kishineff, M. Mihai Razu, to name only persons well-known through the province—had united peasants and land-owners, business men and functionaries, in a willingness to risk annexation for the sake of security. This was soon evidenced by a Peasants' Congress, scheduled for Jan. 18, and heralded by the Russians as sure to undo the work of the Diet. Of the 384 delegates, only 118 assembled; their leaders protested against the Roumanian occupation, to be sure, but discovered they had only luke-warm support, and the Congress dissolved.

And now the Diet took another step forward; on Jan. 23, 1918, it proclaimed the independence of the Moldavian Republic; Inculetz and Erhan

pointed out that the situation of Bessarabia, between two independent states, Roumania and the Ukraine, necessitated this action. Ciugureanu, the new President of the Council of Directors, had already voiced the sentiments of many of his colleagues, in the debates of Jan. 16: "From the moment I first began to think and to form political convictions, I have belonged to the Social Revolutionary Party, and have looked upon national problems from that point of view, which I consider to be that of a broad federal autonomy. I have spent my life in Russia, I carried on my studies in Russia, nor have I broken off my relations with Russia. We were all of us brought up on the Russian classics, we value them highly, and in consequence we have a solely Russian viewpoint. But how can we speak of a Russian viewpoint today? It is painful to say it, but it is the fact—Russia exists no longer, Russia is falling apart, and the process keeps accentuating itself. The only viewpoint possible today seems to me a Moldavian-Bessarabian. We must think only of ourselves, and how to help ourselves. . . . Yesterday the Roumanian Army arrived; it has created peace and order, but it is going to stay here only so long as its interests lead it to stay; as soon as those interests are satisfied and it leaves, anarchy will begin. In view of this we



(Photograph by Cluj Geographical Institute)

### TYPICAL ERODED PLATEAU



### STREET IN KISHINEFF

must reorganize our army.” Ciugureanu pointed out also the economic crisis, the fact that schools and hospitals were closing for lack of money, the difficulty of laying taxes, complicated by demagoguery, and the impossibility of raising a foreign loan. Nor was his worry over the possible departure of the Roumanian Army decreased by the letter of the French Minister to Roumania, M. de St.-Aulaire, to the French Consul in Kishineff, M. Sarret, under date of Jan. 15, 1918, in which he says: “All my colleagues, Ministers of the Allied Powers, and I, are authorized to declare officially to you that the entry of the Roumanian troops into Bessarabia is a purely military measure, having for its purpose the safeguarding of the normal working of the rear of the Russo-Roumanian Front, in conformity with the regulations established for all the belligerent states. Thus the entry of the Roumanian troops into Bessarabia could not have any bearing either on the present political situation in Bessarabia, or on the future fate of the country.”

With the broad view of events now possible, we can see that the Roumanian Army could not fail to remain. Bessarabia was isolated, the Ukraine independent, Moscow in Bolshevist hands, Wrangel and Denikin yet to appear, and marauding hordes of disbanded Russian soldiers still

trooping through the country. In the West, the defeat of the British Fifth Army was impending, and German victory loomed closer than ever before. Even to those isolated in Bessarabia, there must have seemed nothing available but those troops. The Moldavian Republic made a brave effort to meet the situation. For 62 days it poured oratory on the troubled waters, while the Roumanian troops spread over the province, meeting organized resistance only along the Dniester near Bender. Here the new Rumcerod—Soldiers' Soviet of Odessa—using Tiraspol as a base, conducted quite vigorous operations, especially as the Roumanian troops were widely scattered, from the Sereth front down to the Danube, and repressing the sporadic outbreaks of Russian deserters in Moldavia itself. But the Bolsheviks had their difficulties also—driving back Yudenitch and Korniloff, and the attacks of the Finns, Letts, Esthonians, Ententophile Ukrainians, Czecho-Slovaks and Don Cossacks. Rakovsky had come down to Odessa to form a High Commission to fight Roumanian and Ukrainian counter-revolution; this supplemented the Rumcerod—Soviet of Soldiers and Workers—which was nominally the chief authority even yet in Odessa; and their dealings with the Roumanians over events in Bessarabia bring out the confusion in the



Ukraine. An armistice till Feb. 3 was agreed upon; meanwhile Rakovsky's High Commission and the Rumcerod demanded the evacuation of Bessarabia by the Roumanians, the surrender of all the Russian military stores, the extradition of Gen. Shtcherbatcheff, the Russian Commander-in-Chief, and various other persons, etc. Negotiations went on also between the Allied representatives in Odessa, headed by the Italian Consul Fasciotti, and the Rumcerod. But suddenly the situation changed; the Ukraine signed a separate peace at Brest-Litovsk late in January (Feb. 9, N. S.), three weeks later German troops entered Kieff, the Dniester was set as the boundary, and the Bolshevists disappeared.

## CHAPTER XXI

### RAKOVSKY'S ROUMANIAN CAREER

Rakovsky, the Soviet diplomat, has been so closely connected with recent Russian-Roumanian relations that it is worth while to sketch his life somewhat in detail, particularly as it throws light on the recent history of Socialism in Roumania. Christian (as he now calls himself; in Bulgarian he was christened Krustyu, Cristo = cross) Stantchoff Rakovsky was born Aug. 1 (O. S.), 1873, in the village of Gradetz, near Kotel, high up in the Balkan Mountains in Southern Bulgaria. He had a remarkable uncle, George Sava Rakovsky, whose influence on his youthful ambitions was very great. Sava Rakovsky, after studying in Athens, settled down as a merchant in Constantinople; but he was a born revolutionary, and devoted his life to freeing the Balkan Peninsula from the Turks; when the Serb revolt of 1866-7 broke out, he formed a Bulgarian legion to help them; he became the first Bulgarian journalist of distinction, wrote a famous poem, the "Gorsky Putnik" (Mountain Traveler), and even composed philological treatises.

Christian's early education took place in Bulgaria, in spite of his parents' removal in 1880 to Gherencic, not far from Constantza, in the Roumanian Dobrudja; he was finally expelled from the Gobrova Gymnasium in 1890 for Socialist propaganda. He continued his studies at Geneva, where he also began his career as a Socialist editor, bringing out several numbers of a Bulgarian quarterly, the "Social-Democrat"; then he studied in Berlin (being expelled from Prussia in 1894), Zürich, Nancy and Montpellier, where he took his degree in medicine in 1897 with a thesis on the causes of crime and degeneracy, later translated into Russian and Bulgarian. He also translated into Bulgarian Gabriel Deville's "Evolution of Capital," worked on various Bulgarian newspapers and was correspondent for the Berlin "Vorwärts." In 1898, he published at Varna a study on "Russia in the Orient," in which he took occasion to criticize Russia for the seizure of Bessarabia; on Sept. 15 he became regimental doctor for the 9th Roumanian Cavalry at Constantza, but continued his writing, bringing out brochures on the Dreyfus affair, against spiritualism and on "La France Contemporaine" (published at St. Petersburg).

In 1900, Rakovsky went into Russia, but was expelled within a fortnight; he succeeded however

in returning in 1901, his wife being a Russian; and he plunged at once into Russian literary and political work, publishing children's stories as well as socialistic articles, and helping to establish "Iskra," the organ of the Russian Social Democratic Party; in 1907, he was formally thanked at the Stuttgart Congress by the members of the Russian Social Democratic Delegation for his services to the cause of the Russian Revolution and of the proletariat against Czarism. Among the signers we find the names of Plekhanoff, Martoff and Trotzky. Meanwhile he had gone to Paris in 1902 to study law, writing for the "Mouvement Socialiste" and the "Revue Socialiste"; he applied for French naturalization, but the French Government declined to grant it. In 1904 his father's death brought him back to the Dobrudja, where he had inherited property valued at some \$40,000. In the summer of 1904 and 1905 he lectured in Bulgaria on socialism; but in 1905 he settled down to the practice of the law in Constantza.

Roumanian Socialism was in a bad way at that time. Many of its leaders had gone into the Liberal Party, and its journal—"România Muncitoare" (Working Roumania)—had died of inanition. Its most remarkable man was Constantine Dobrogeanu-Gherea, a Russian Jew, originally

named Solomon Solomonovitch Katz, whose life has been a veritable Odyssey; he even traveled once with an American passport, under the name of Robert Jenckes; I have last heard of him as in the Council of the Moldavian Soviet Republic. Rakovsky revived "România Muncitoare" on March 5, 1905. Accused of being a Bulgarian rather than Roumanian in sentiments, he writes in the issue of April 10, 1905, that he recognizes "no country but the common country of the international proletariat"; and in his first public address, on May 1, he excuses his faulty use of Roumanian by appealing to his audience's knowledge of that "international social democratic language." Accused next of lack of patriotism, he writes on May 22nd that if patriotism means "race prejudice, international and civil war, political tyranny and plutocratic domination," he is not a patriot. When the peasant uprising of March 1907 broke out, he appealed to the soldiers to shoot in the air; and as he later published an article in the Paris "Humanité" accusing the Roumanian Army of atrocities in repressing this revolt, the government decided to discipline him, since he was a Lieutenant in the Medical Reserve Corps. They issued a decree of expulsion, which found Rakovsky at the Stuttgart Congress; he contested it, claiming that he was a Roumanian

citizen, since his father had been domiciled in the Dobrudja April 11, 1877, and had therefore acquired Roumanian citizenship through the Treaty of Berlin, with the passage of that territory to Roumania. This claim however was denied by the High Court of Cassation (Appeals), which ruled that his father was not a Roumanian citizen, having first settled permanently in the Dobrudja in 1880, and noted that Rakovsky himself had used a Bulgarian passport in entering Roumania on two occasions, and had put himself down as Bulgarian when he studied in Berlin.

Rakovsky then had to stay outside of Roumania for some time; but he kept writing for the "România Muncitoare," and in July 1909 he published at Paris a pamphlet on "Les Persécutions Politiques en Roumanie." A few months later he tried to enter Roumania with a French passport; and in February 1911 he succeeded, appearing unexpectedly in Bucharest, and writing to the Public Prosecutor: "I can give you the assurance, concurred in by my friends and political associates, deeply respectful, like myself, toward law and order, that our one wish is that, in peace and tranquility, my case may find its proper solution under the law." The government allowed him a brief stay, and he even ran for Parliament Feb. 20, 1911, in Galatz, receiving 329 out of 4094

votes; at a special election in April in Mehedintzi, he was given 27 votes. Reëxpelled from Roumania, he founded the daily Socialist paper "Napred" in Sofia, in which he fought for a Balkan Federation; but in January 1912 his efforts were finally crowned with success, and he returned to Roumania. One of his first public acts was to take part in the ceremony of mourning, on May 16th, for the centennial of the Russian seizure of Bessarabia, and to protest, in the name of the proletariat, against the continuance of Czaristic government there; he even predicted the liberation of Bessarabia by the Russian Revolution.

When the Balkan Wars began, Rakovsky conducted a vigorous pacifist campaign—at first international, then directed specifically against Roumanian acquisition of Bulgarian territory. Called to task by the government, he wrote in the "România Muncitoare" of Feb. 3, 1913: "If it were a question of defending Roumanian territory, in its present form, against no matter who, we Socialists would be the first to go to war. Indeed, we can state with assurance that if there had been a Socialist Party in Roumania in 1879, it would not have remained impassive before the annexation of Bessarabia, as the governmental parties did, and if it could not have prevented

this crime by its protests and efforts, it would have sowed hopes for the future in the spirits of the Bessarabian Roumanians." On Oct. 31, 1913, his newspaper printed this appeal to the new recruits: "You are given a weapon with which to shoot men. Take this weapon. Those are our weapons, they are paid for with our sweat, they have often been pointed at our hearts. Every soldier ought to realize that if he is perforce a defender of a deceitful country, he is through his labor a defender of the class to which he belongs, the world of the deluded and those deprived of their rights, who will some day wage a bitter war on the most merciless enemy the working classes can have—the governing, possessing class. For that war, and for that alone, we must make every preparation, and learn every stratagem."

But this propaganda made little headway; in April and May, the "România Muncitoare" issued desperate cries for help, its subscription list having shrunk to 2000; and Rakovsky, in spite of constant campaigning for the Roumanian Parliament, received fewer and fewer votes. With the World War, his pacifistic efforts redoubled; he changed his paper's name to "Jos Răsboiul" (Down with War), and then to "Lupta Zilnică" (The Daily Struggle). It is interesting to note the anti-Russian tone of his articles; in the Rus-



sian Social Democratic daily "Golos" (Voice) of Paris, in January 1915 (reproduced in "Lupta Zilnică" of Jan. 22): "Our French comrades assure us that the Allies, including Russia, are fighting for the principle of nationality. We who live in Eastern Europe, in immediate proximity to the Muscovite Empire, ask liberty to doubt that. . . . We admit the imperialistic policy of Austria in the Balkans, but who can deny that a similar danger exists from Russia toward Roumania and Bulgaria, who lie on her pathway toward the Straits?" He protested against Italy's entrance into the war, but had not a word to say when Bulgaria attacked Serbia. In Jan. 1916, he got only 109 votes at Covurlui, less than half of what he had received in the elections of 1911, 1912 and (two) 1914.

When Roumania entered the war, Rakovsky was put under strict surveillance, from which he was released in May 1917 by revolting Russian soldiers in Jassy; and his long experience and great talents brought him rapid advancement under the Bolsheviks. On Sept. 5 he started a paper in Odessa, with the motto "Peace without annexations or indemnities"; later in the winter he became Governor of Odessa, and promptly took advantage of his position to get even with the Roumanian bourgeois refugees in that city. He

confiscated the Roumanian government deposits in Odessa and a large share of all private deposits, imprisoned all Roumanians of importance, and released them only under high cash bonds. In view of his recent polemic against Roumania on the subject of Bessarabia, summarized in his vivacious and entertaining pamphlet "Roumanie et Bessarabie" (Paris, Librairie du Travail, 1925), it is amusing to turn to his "Russie en Orient" (Varna, 1898) and read his violent attacks upon Russia for her occupation of Roumanian Bessarabia.

## CHAPTER XXII

### COLLAPSE OF THE BESSARABIAN REPUBLIC

So the new independent Moldavian Republic had a brief opportunity to try and make its way alone, under Roumanian tutelage. It proved unable to raise taxes, create militia, borrow money or enforce its decrees. Its agrarian legislation had alienated all the land-owners and moneyed interests of the province; these hoped that the Roumanian troops (whom the Russian propaganda had represented as merely agents of the boyars and international money-lenders) would undo the confiscatory legislation of the Sfatul Tzării; but there also they were disappointed. Thus the Diet found itself unpopular on every side; the trained men of the old Russian régime were discredited or had fled, the new elements were without political experience, there was no budget, the difficulty of laying taxes was enhanced by the rapid depreciation of the ruble, the deficit was growing by leaps and bounds. Furthermore, the centralization of the old Russian administration had proved its own undoing. The Moldavian

peasants of Bessarabia had been kept in ignorance and isolation; what little local government had been permitted was of recent introduction, and had taken slight root among the native population; and when the central government up in Russia collapsed, this remote province was left in suspense, at the mercy of populist demagogues.

It was all in vain that the Odessa Rumcerod secured a promise from the Roumanians that they would evacuate Bessarabia within two months, as indeed all their assurances indicated; events were too strong for them, and showed that the Imperial Russian administration of Bessarabia for a century had been sterile; nor could the new democratic régime in Russia—if we may call it democratic for even a brief moment—find elements in Bessarabia with which to work. Had there been a Russian middle class in Bessarabia of any political training, or even a Russian peasantry, Bessarabia would today be as Russian as Podolia or Cherson; the Roumanian military occupation would have been merely an episode of a few weeks or months. But the inarticulate Moldavian peasants discovered kinship in the Roumanian soldiers whose coming they had been led to fear; the Jews, who constitute the great majority of the business classes, found in them saviors from

the pogroms then raging in the Ukraine; the boyars had little choice, after all; in Russia proper they would have lost their lives as well as their lands; and they soon discovered that in Roumania itself their fellow-boyars were having to submit to the same inexorable expropriation. Thus events marched rapidly and inevitably toward annexation.

The new Bessarabian Republic was invited to send delegates to sign the Peace of Bucharest between Roumania and the Central Powers, and In-culetz, Halippa and Ciugureanu went over into Roumania Feb. 26, 1918, being received with special distinction. They learned from Gen. Averescu, then (as in 1926-7) Premier, and a Bessarabian by birth, that he had stood up for the independence of the Republic, against a proposal of the Austrians for a division of Bessarabia between Austria and Roumania; indeed, Austrian forces occupied the north of Bessarabia till late in 1918. The Roumanians received also at this time a very significant document, presented by a commission of former high officials in Bessarabian public life—P. Sinadino, former member of the Imperial Duma and Mayor of Kishineff, V. Anghel, ex-president of the Orhei Zemstvo, M. Glavce, ex-president of the Kishineff Zemstvo, D.

Semogradoff, ex-president of the provincial Zemstvo, and many others of distinction in the province. This memorial states:

“We have considered that it would be well to have an accurate résumé, supported by data, to make known the real political and agrarian situation in Bessarabia, for only in this way can it be seen how well founded is the view of those who by virtue of their intellectual, cultural, moral and material situation have the right and duty of defending Bessarabia against the attacks of those who are eager to take advantage of its disorganized condition, and are trying to secure personal advantages, to the detriment of the country’s present and future well-being. As will be seen, the present administration and the so-called Provincial Diet are an adventitious creation of adventitious politicians and adventurers, who, profiting by the Bolshevik revolt (for MM. Erhan and Inculetz came from Petrograd to Kishineff as Bolshevik delegates), have proclaimed an independent republic and have seized control of the situation, promising the masses the confiscation of estates and property, to be turned over to them without any compensation, the destruction of the bourgeoisie, and the grant of an anarchic liberty, without respect for the laws, rights and lives of their fellow-citizens.

The Roumanian Army, alarmed by this revolu-

tion, created by these politicians under these circumstances, has intervened and calmed the disorders which had arisen. The administration, which at the beginning was desirous of opposing the Roumanian Army, seeing the impossibility of this, changed its attitude and has been trying to make it appear that it received the coming of the Roumanian Army with pleasure; but beneath the surface it continues to conduct a revolutionary campaign, and is even trying to make the Roumanian Army seem opposed to the fulfilment of its promises, viz., the distribution to the peasants of the boyars' property without compensation. These machinations are however preparing future disorder, and constitute a danger not only for Bessarabia but also for the Roumanian Army, exposed to this dissolving medium. The present administration is doing nothing but live by make-shifts day to day without the establishment of any organization. This state of affairs cannot last long. It endangers both the future of Bessarabia and its tendency toward union with Roumania. It is impossible for an administration to last which has as its goal disorder, illegality and arbitrariness.

We therefore beg, on the basis of what will be shown later, that our protest may seem justified, and that Roumania (with which country we, without any reservation, desire to be united) may give us speedily support, counsel, and moral and mate-

rial assistance, to do away with a revolutionary status organized by a bogus administration and a bogus Diet."

This petition, of which we have translated the opening paragraphs, shows the state of mind of many of the important land-owners and former officials. Numerous other petitions came in; on March 3, the Zemstvo of Baltz voted in favor of union with Roumania, and on March 13, the same action was taken by a convention in Soroca, composed of representatives of the Zemstvo, the city government, clergy, land-owners, teaching staff, etc.

The Diet was of course unfavorably affected by these and similar actions; and the members of the Russophile agrarian group fought all the more bitterly with the Moldavian representatives, who were gradually veering around toward union. This movement was powerfully aided by new activities of the Ukraine; their Premier, Golubovitch, sent delegates to Berlin to claim part of Bessarabia. The matter came up in the Diet on March 16; Ciugureanu read the memorial presented at Berlin by the Ukrainians, and it was finally decided unanimously to send a protest to Berlin, in the lack of armed forces with which



to repulse Ukrainian troops, in case they should come over the border.

Nor did the situation in Roumania itself fail to have its effect here also. On March 20, Inculetz and Ciugureanu visited Jassy, and found that the new Roumanian ministry, under Marghiloman, was determined to sign a peace with the Central Powers at once, and felt that annexation to Roumania was the only way of saving Bessarabia from being dismembered. Marghiloman informed them that he was going to accept the petitions from Baltz and Soroca, and the manifesto signed by Sinadino and his associates, but that he hoped that the Diet would take similar action. Ciugureanu was strongly in favor of this course; Inculetz became convinced of its wisdom only after consultation with the French Ambassador and other dignitaries at Jassy. On March 23rd, Constantine Stere, the Bessarabian editor of the pro-German paper *Lumina* in Bucharest, joined Ciugureanu and Inculetz in their return to Kishineff to lay the matter before the Diet; and on the 26th, Premier Marghiloman himself arrived.

March 27, 1918, saw the valedictory of the Independent Moldavian Bessarabian Democratic Republic. Marghiloman opened the session with an

eloquent address, pointing out the necessity of union from the international standpoint. Then he and the other Roumanians withdrew, and left the Diet to its debates. Stere, who (however he may be execrated for his course during the war) is one of the greatest of the Roumanian orators, then delivered an impassioned and moving speech, which we reproduce in full: "In the life of a man, and in the history of a people, there are not many moments like this. I am proud and happy that you have given me the opportunity of taking up the struggle for the rights and the freedom of Bessarabia, whose son I am (applause). Imprisoned in Siberian dungeons by a tyrant, I return today to the soil of my native land under the bright light of the freedom which you have gained by your own blood. We are called today to make an historic decision, for which we need a clear mind and a clear conscience. The iron will of history has laid a responsibility on your shoulders which you cannot put aside. None but you can speak, and have the right to speak, in the name of Bessarabia (applause). We are called here in that elemental process which pulverizes Bastilles and creates new life. The Revolution brought us here (tumultuous applause). You have here lighted a torch which has burned all the feudal parchments, which has annihilated all the privileges of caste,

and you remain a people whose foundations rest on nothing but the farm and intellectual labor (appl.). You must even carry that torch over yonder, to consume dry rot and injustice, to defend the whole Roumanian people in this, the most critical moment of its history (appl.). Today we proclaim the rights of the Revolution for Roumanians (appl.). I thank you for the honor you have done me. It is a heavy burden for me; but though I have reached the sixth decade of my life, I am still eager to dash into the struggle with the same energy and faith as in my youth, when the gates of the dungeon opened before me (ovation)."

After speaking thus in Roumanian, Stere turned to the Russian members and, in Russian, tried to still their fears of Roumanian domination. Indeed, he reexpressed the hope that Bessarabian radicalism would profoundly affect Roumania itself. Alluding to the statement of one of the Russian deputies that if Bessarabia joined Roumania, the Russian intelligentsia would leave Bessarabia, he remarked: "How slight must be the bond which unites such a man with this country! He is not like a Roumanian Bessarabian, born and brought up here. . . . We are from here, we have nowhere else to go, and no one has a right to drive us out."

The Secretary of the Diet then read the following resolution:

“The Democratic Moldavian Republic of Bessarabia, within its boundaries of the Pruth, the Dniester, the Danube, the Black Sea and the former Austrian frontier, torn by Russia over 106 years ago from the body of Old Moldavia, by virtue of historic right and of the rights of nationalities, and basing itself on the principle that each people should decide its fate, from today on and for ever joins its mother country, Roumania.

This union takes place on the following conditions:

1) The present Diet continues in existence for determining and carrying into effect the agrarian reform according to the needs and demands of the people; these decisions shall be recognized by the Roumanian Government.

2) Bessarabia retains her provincial autonomy, having a Diet, to be elected in the future by universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage, with an executive organization, and its own administration.

3) The Diet shall have jurisdiction: a) over the voting of local budgets; b) the control of the executive organs of the zemstvos and municipal administrations; c) the nomination of all local administrative organizations through its own executive organization, while high officials are confirmed by the government.

4) The recruiting of the army is in principle to rest on a territorial basis.

5) Current laws and organizations (zemstvo and municipal) remain in power and may be changed by the Roumanian Parliament only after participation of the Bessarabian representatives in the discussions.

6) Respect for the rights of the minorities.

7) Two representatives of Bessarabia are to enter the Roumanian Council of Ministers; they shall be named now by the present Diet, but in the future shall be taken from among the Bessarabian representatives in the Roumanian Parliament.

8) Bessarabia shall send to the Roumanian Parliament a number of representatives in proportion to her population, chosen on the basis of universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage.

9) All the elections in Bessarabia for the villages, volosts (communes), cities, zemstvos and parliament shall be based on universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage.

10) Personal liberty, freedom of the press, of speech, of belief, of assembly, and all common liberties, shall be guaranteed by the Constitution.

11) All illegal acts perpetrated for political motives during the recent troublous times, are pardoned.

Upon Bessarabia joining Roumania, like a daughter her mother, the Roumanian Parliament shall decide the immediate calling of a Constitu-

tional Convention, in which shall take part a proportionate number of Bessarabian representatives, chosen by universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage, to decide together with the rest the inscription in the Constitution of the principles and guarantees mentioned above.”

When brought before the Diet, this resolution was promptly accepted by the leader of the Moldavian Bloc; Tziganco, representative of the Peasants' Soviet, declared that his group would refrain from voting, since they considered this a matter for a Constitutional Convention, and furthermore felt that the only admissible terms for union with Roumania would be in a federation. von Loesch, the German representative, stated that his group also would abstain from voting, since they had no authorization to take any such step; they would call a congress of Bessarabian Germans, and bring the matter before them. As a matter of fact, this Congress was soon held, under the chairmanship of Rev. Dr. Haase, later a representative in the Roumanian Parliament, and the union with Roumania was sanctioned. The Bulgarian representative, Misircoff, stated that he would refrain from voting, since he also felt that this was a matter for a Constitutional Con-



(From an old print)

GYPSY FAMILY EN ROUTE, JULY 19, 1837

[www.dacoromanica.ro](http://www.dacoromanica.ro)

vention to decide; and the same declaration was made in the name of the Ukrainian members. The Polish leader, Dudkevitch (Dutkiewicz) said (in Russian): "It is very hard for me, gentlemen, on this great day, an occasion without a peer, it is very hard for me to talk in the language of the people who for so many years have oppressed the spirit of the Roumanian people of Bessarabia, as they have oppressed the Poles. I should like to speak in my own language, Polish, but you gentlemen would not understand it; I should like to speak in your language, Roumanian, but I do not know it. In the name of the Polish nationality I support the project of union as the Moldavians propose it." The Russian leader, Greculoff, felt, like the Bulgarian, that a Constitutional Convention should first be held. This desire for a convention was partly genuine, partly a move for delay, to preserve independence or to bring about union with Soviet Russia.

After a brief recess, the representatives of the Peasants' Soviet members announce that after consultation they have decided to support the project of union as outlined in the resolution. The President calls for a vote; all but 13 members of the Diet are present. The resolution is adopted by a vote of 86 for, 3 against, 36 present



but refraining from voting, for the reasons given above; see pp. 151-7 for the list. Bessarabia, by the vote of its sole constituted authority, however makeshift, is now a part of Roumania.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### FRICTION UNDER THE NEW RÉGIME

For a day or two, Kishineff gave itself up to celebration; but then the Diet again took up its labors. Stere was elected President; Inculetz and Ciugureanu were appointed Ministers without Portfolio for Bessarabia in the Roumanian Cabinet; and a Council of Directors General was chosen by the Diet for the administration of the province, under the presidency of Dr. P. Cazacu, whose sober and well-documented history of Bessarabia has been my most trusted source, as it must be for anyone who treats the subject. His Council adopted a long program, pointing out the need of a budget, revenue, economy in administration, enforcement of the law, adoption of a liberal school system, agrarian reform, etc. Since the preliminary studies for the agrarian reform needed time, the Council decided that peasants might rent land during the season of 1918-19; all the land belonging to the state and to institutions was thrown open to renting; owners of estates running from 100 to 600 desyatins might keep  $\frac{1}{3}$  for themselves; those of estates from 600 up,  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

But the Council met with greater difficulties in other matters. Russian functionaries and officials of all kinds declined to serve under the new government, presuming that it would be short-lived and fearing reprisals later. No one could realize that the Russian Empire had really vanished; and there was hope in the minds of many Russians, just as with the Hungarians in Transylvania, that the Peace Conference would refuse to recognize Roumanian overlordship.

The resultant confusion was endless. The Council made overtures to the Russian lawyers and judges, to continue in a transition régime and clear up the dockets; but the majority crossed the Dniester and waited patiently for the restoration of Russian rule, so that the Council had to establish a complete new judiciary from quite inadequate material. Gendarmes and police had to be improvised from Bessarabia itself and the Old Kingdom, under prefects whom they tried to choose from non-partisan quarters, but who were not "of the career," as most of those now in Bessarabia are proud to boast that they are. Furthermore, control of these matters was taken out of the hands of the Council through the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest (see "Greater Roumania," chapters XVI-XVII), which laid Bessarabia under requisition for the Central Powers;

this necessitated military control, martial law, censorship, etc., under the Roumanian Gen. Văitoianu, later Prime Minister, who was charged with carrying out the burdensome requisitions. As usually happens in a Bessarabian crisis, there was a drought; as everywhere, people drew unfavorable comparisons with the good old days under the Russian Empire, not realizing that the times themselves were out of joint.

No wonder that discontent was widespread, and that blame for the hard times was laid upon the Moldavian leaders of the Diet, and the Roumanians. The Mayor of Kishineff, A. C. Schmidt, led the malcontents; he was replaced, as was the Communal Council, elected in the wild days of 1917, when all Russian soldiers who happened to be in Kishineff were allowed to vote. The Council of Directors General also abolished the Provincial Zemstvo, as an anachronism in the new governmental structure, and introduced the Roumanian judicial system. This was all in the inevitable evolution of the situation, but staggered conservative Bessarabians, who had never taken the Diet seriously, and who had not dreamed as yet that Bessarabia might really have started on a path leading away from Russia. A number of earnest supporters of autonomy united with Russians of various political beliefs in protests

against one or other of the actions of the Roumanians; these will be found in the booklet entitled "The Roumanian Occupation in Bessarabia: Documents," of the "Publications of the Bessarabian Delegation," presented to the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919 by MM. Krupensky and Schmidt. The more important of these documents are: the minutes of a meeting of the Kishineff Justices of the Peace held Oct. 21, 1918, protesting against the promulgation by royal decree of several fundamental changes in the judicial procedure in Bessarabia; these included the substitution of Roumanian for Russian in the courts, the abolition of the Russian position of J. P. and the substitution of a new class of assistant judges; appointment of judges by the Crown in place of election; power of the Crown to remove judges; and insistence upon taking the oath of allegiance to Roumania as a condition to retention in office of the present judges, the latter being perhaps the most repugnant stipulation to many of them. The same phenomenon was observed in Transylvania, where Hungarian bishop and professor insisted upon receiving their salaries from the Roumanian state, but declined to swear allegiance to it; and the same outcome resulted, for just as in Transylvania, the Roumanian state was anxious to utilize the services of its new Hungarian and

Russian subjects, and all who would continue as loyal Roumanian citizens were welcomed and are in most cases still in office. The majority of the signers of these protests (and those below), if they stayed in Bessarabia and became Roumanian citizens, are now conspicuous in the life of the province.

Similar resolutions of protest against the introduction of Roumanian procedure were passed on Oct. 12 by the Judges of the Russian Court of Appeals, on Oct. 14 by some forty members of the Kishineff Bar, and on Oct. 8 and 11 by the officials of the Bessarabian Provincial Zemstvo; and one easily understands their attitude. It is true that a Roumanian Royal Decree is no more extra-constitutional than a Ukase of the Czar, or a Resolution of the Soviets; but the Russian office-holders in Bessarabia, many of whom came from other parts of Russia, had presumed that they would be protected in their attributes by a large measure of autonomy given the province, and had not anticipated that Bessarabia would be administered under martial law as an integral part of Roumania. The same thing happened in Transylvania; and perhaps the disappointment at the centralization was greater among the Roumanians of the new provinces than among the members of the minority races. One's first impulse is to

blame the Roumanians for governing their new territories from Bucharest, instead of giving them wide provincial autonomy, as they expected; but we did something similar in Porto Rico (whose citizens we failed to make American citizens for over 15 years) and the Philippines; and the political and constitutional difficulties of incorporating these provinces into Roumania on a basis of partial independence may be appreciated if we visualize ourselves in a similar situation—let us say, annexing the Province of Quebec and abolishing tariff and other barriers, but trying to preserve the Quebec Liquor Law, church schools and other peculiarities of the provincial organization. Nevertheless, the disappointment in Bessarabia was very great; the Roumanians were unfortunate in some of their early appointees; and this feeling was expressed in a memorial handed to the Roumanian Government Nov. 20, 1918, by forty Bessarabian deputies; I use the facsimile (in Russian; I have seen no copy of the Roumanian text) given in the "Documents" mentioned above, but I have made my own translation of the rather formal and stilted Russian, less bold and dashing but (I hope) more accurate than theirs:

"In cognizance of the extraordinarily difficult conditions of life in our native Bessarabia, created

on the one hand by the long-drawn-out, nerve-racking and ruinous war, and on the other by the criminally ignorant conduct of affairs by the Council of Directors, at this grave and formidable historic moment through which our country is passing, we, the undersigned deputies, consider it our sacred duty and obligation to point out to the Roumanian Government the devastating consequences of the administrative policy which has been put into effect on every occasion.

In the complete economic breakdown of the country, in impoverished and starving Bessarabia, formerly so flourishing, every element of social vigor and of public control is violently done away with, all civic liberties are stifled, the inviolability of citizens and representatives of the people is infringed, arbitrary harshness is displayed toward the population of the country by various governmental agents who have replaced former officials, native citizens of Bessarabia by birth; and finally the rights of national minorities are trampled underfoot and racial differences and enmities are aroused between people who have been living together in a friendly and brotherly fashion. This situation compels us to make a severe statement on all this, and to express our firm purpose to the Government.

For the guaranteeing of public peace, for the allaying of nervous excitement and angry irritability among all classes of our Bessarabia, in the



midst of the ugly murmurings of the country, which has once again weathered for us all a hateful period of anarchy, and in a strong and sincere desire to avert any governmental clash whatever, we lay before the Roumanian Government the following requests:

1) Restoration by government order of freedom of speech and of the rights of assembly and union, and the abolition of the censorship.

2) Personal inviolability of the Deputies and in general of all Bessarabian citizens.

3) (*sic*) Note: None of the Deputies of the Diet shall be deprived of his liberty without a decision of the Diet, nor a Bessarabian citizen without judicial warrant.

3) Restoration of the Deputies who have been expelled from the Diet, till which restoration no bill may be examined by the Diet.

4) Abolition of martial law and of individual restrictions, and restoration of constitutional guarantees.

5) New elections for officers of the Diet and for Directors.

6) All power in Bessarabia to belong to the Council of Directors, chosen by the Diet, and the Commission-General to be abolished.

7) Strict lodging of the gendarmes in barracks, and their withdrawal from villages into towns designated by the Director of Internal Affairs in

the new Directorate, and their subordination to civil authority.

8) Convocation of the suppressed organs of provincial and municipal autonomy, with restoration of their abolished rights, in conformity with the laws of the Temporary Government.

9) Restoration to office of all the removed Bessarabian office-holders and government employees of all institutions.

10) Restoration in their former entity of all judicial institutions.

11) Restoration of their national rights to the national minorities.

12) Immediate passage of a measure for elections to the Diet, with the designation by the present Diet of a date for the new elections.

13) The creation through the Diet of a Special Commission for the investigation of all infringements of law committed by civil and military authorities in Bessarabia.

All the above requests, based on the Act of March 27, 1918, must be carried out; in contrary case, the undersigned Deputies decline moral responsibility for the consequences; likewise, by the rejection of these requests, the Act of March 27, 1918, is invalidated.

We beg for a reply to the present memorial by the close of the Diet, or in any event by Dec. 5, 1918, O. S.

The present document has been made out for signature in two copies.”

(Signatures) <sup>1</sup>

1. Former Vice-President of the Moldavian Bloc  
Ioan Păscălutză
2. President of the Military Congress V. Cijev-  
schi (Tchizhevsky)
3. President of the People's League N. Alec-  
sandri
4. Vice-President of the Provincial Zemstvo T.  
Surutchan (Suruceanu)
5. Secretary of the Diet B. Epuri
6. Former Vice-Director of Industry and Com-  
merce V. Ghenzul
7. Deputy in the Diet of the Moldavian Bloc T.  
Koropcean (Corobcean)
8. President of the Bessarabian Peasants' Com-  
mittee Gavril Buciushcan
9. President of the Peasants' Party Vladimir  
Tziganko
10. Former Vice-Director for Internal Affairs  
Donico-Iordakesco
11. Secretary of the Peasants' Committee and  
Group F. (T.?) Moldovanu
12. President of the Coalition Committee of Rep-  
resentatives of the Professional Unions of  
Employees Stephan Balamez

<sup>1</sup> Most of these are in the list pp. 151-7.

13. Former Departmental Manager of the Department of Manufactures and Trade M. Russu
14. Representative of the County Zemstvo of Bender Alesandru Rotcu
15. Member of the Regional Committee of the Peasants' Party Group in the Diet Feodor Nichitiuc (Nikitiuk)
16. George Brynitch (Brinici)
17. Former Vice-President of the Bessarabian Peasants' Committee Nikitza Budnitchenko
18. Peter Kuntcheff (Cuncev)
19. Member of the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Party Michael Minciună
20. Ion Popa
21. Basil Ceresco (Ciorăscu)
22. Representative of the Professional Unions of Employees, and Deputy in the Diet Theodore Pojoga
23. Do., do., Michael Machedon
24. City Counselor V. Luneff
25. Representative of the Bessarabian Postal Employees Feodor (Teodor) Uncu
26. Ion Garbus (Garbuz)
27. Former President of the Orhei Zemstvo Executive Committee, Representative in the Diet of the Bessarabian Armenians Bajbeuk-Melicoff
28. Nicanor Ciocan
29. Philipp Almendinger

30. Peter Picior-Mare
31. Vice-President of the Organizing Committee of the Diet V. Zubac
32. President of the Kishineff County Zemstvo Theodore Neagul (Neaga)
33. E. Veseteu (Vizitiu)
34. Former Minister of the Interior for the Moldavian Republic, Deputy of the Peasants' Party and former Commissioner of the Provisional Government Vladimir Kristy
35. Zacharias Bocsan (Bacsan)
36. President of the Dancu (?) Cantonal Committee Deputy Calis. Savtchuk (Savciuc)
37. Representative of the Bulgarians and Gagauz, Deputy in the Diet A. Novacoff
38. Deputy of the Peasants' Group A. P. Culava
39. Deputy Demetrius Markitante (Mărchitan)
40. Deputy of the Ismaïl Zemstvo I. Kiriloff

These be brave words indeed, requesting the restoration of all peacetime practices, the reappointment to their posts of Russian functionaries (who refused to take the oath of allegiance to Roumania, of course), the withdrawal of Roumanian officials and police, and in general a return to as near pre-war conditions as possible. It will easily be imagined how unenthusiastic a reception it received from the Roumanian authorities, at their wits' end to know how to meet the dangers which

loomed up in the East from the Bolshevists, and to satisfy the exactions of the Germans and Austrians, who were in control. We cannot but applaud the admirable aims of the 40 Deputies, in most of their requests; but at the same time we must wonder at their ingenuousness; they did not foresee the constant turbulence on the Eastern frontier, which even at that time impressed the Roumanians, and which have maintained martial law and the censorship steadily in Bessarabia up to the present day, in one or another form.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE DECAY OF RUSSIAN SENTIMENT

No, the Russian days of Bessarabia were over, and the Russians had only themselves to thank for it, as is confessed in an interesting article by L. Sotoff, *Letters from Bessarabia*, in the "*Sovremennia Zapiski*," no. 5, 1921, pp. 263-270 (I use the reprint in "*Istoritcheskaja Pravda po Bessarabskomu Voprosu*," pp. 31-34; there is a partial Roumanian translation by Cazacu, pp. 329-330):

"The longer one or other district remains in the power of a new government, the more do new habits and new forms of social life work themselves out in the masses. It is usual to talk about the inflexibility and invariability of economic bonds and channels, inevitably pushing back a severed member to its former trunk. But in reality if the political situation blocks the old channels, gradually and imperceptibly new ones carve themselves out. Life looks out for itself, and time is on its side. The channels of trade and industrial intercourse change, and in this regard it is not a question of laws but of facts. (Note: As regards

economic, material and natural bonds between Russia and Bessarabia, they never existed; all Bessarabian products, whether of the farm or the village, were sent out over the border via Odessa, in place of which they can now go out through natural channels via the Danube. All imports into Bessarabia came either from Poland or over the border.) But what are the facts with regard to the popular feeling toward Russia in Bessarabia? If a road toward union through the popular will lies open before us, what are the prospects for its manifestation?

We can immediately reply calmly to this question: that prospect is unfavorable. In its policy of Roumanizing the country, the Roumanian Government has found fertile soil in the extraordinarily low cultural level of the population of Bessarabia. Having been, up to the Revolution, in the hands of the boyar Black Hundred, this province with its manifold racial elements stood on a very low plane of cultural development. The stupid Russifying and anti-Semitic policy of the autocratic government brought about a situation where the great mass of the Moldavian and Jewish population kept apart from Russian schools, Russian books and in general all elements of Russian culture. Between the Russian intelligentsia and the masses, not only of the Moldavian and Jewish population but also of the purely Russian, there was a great gulf fixed.



The Moldavian population was completely alien, not merely to Russian spiritual culture, but also to the Russian civic administration. Alas, the Russifiers reached the point where the peasant who came into town felt as if he were in a dark and mysterious forest! The Zemstvo was in the hands of the pupils of Crushevan (the anti-Semite), while in the Russian State Duma, Bessarabia had outspoken members of the Black Hundred (the boyars). In every government office, they had the right that he should not understand them. Courts, schools, churches, government offices, all were foreign-language institutions for him; and since over and above all this, there ruled a wild arbitrariness, it can easily be imagined to what degree the masses of the Moldavian population remained alien to Russia, alien to its inherent cultural, historical and political value.

Somewhat closer to Russian culture stood the Jewish element, partly because it was concentrated in the towns. But in the villages, at the fairs and markets, you could see how the bulk of the Jewish inhabitants, small tradesmen and handicraftsmen, could hardly make themselves understood in Russian, or did not understand the language at all, while they expressed themselves admirably in Roumanian.

The Roumanians on this score found the ground fully prepared for them. They came into an environment which understood them and which they

understood. A new administration came in which spoke in a language available to the people. All at once in all the government institutions they began talking Roumanian.

Far more serious in the process of Roumanizing the country was the general nationalistic policy of the Roumanians. Its fundamental principle was this—the protection of all national cultures. Do you want a school in Yiddish, in Ancient Hebrew, in Ukrainian, in Polish, in Greek? Go ahead as far as you please. It went so far that the national culture of the various stocks, which had been repressed by the grip of autocratic violence, burst forth into freedom with the coming of the Roumanians.

The population eagerly took advantage of these gifts, and thus the falling away from Russian culture in the intellectual life of the province [goes on rapidly and painlessly], imperceptibly in the case of the bulk of the people, who had previously been strangers to Russian culture, and without interest in its preservation and development. [This process continues without hindrance. The local Russian and Russified intelligentsia assist this process by their boycotting policy, which they adopted from the very coming of the Roumanians. From being an active factor, struggling in protest, which involved sacrifice, they have withdrawn into a state of passive dissolution.] As a genuine social force, the Russian intelligentsia today in Bes-

sarabia does not exist. Subjectively, it is in opposition to the Roumanian government. But that opposition remains buried within it, setting no one on fire, and failing to rouse the dormant Russian sentiment.

Russian patriotic feeling so far is sound only in the Russian intelligentsia (but there it is not active), and among the former Russian boyars; but their opposition is purely due to dispossession from their estates.

Time passes, and together with it Russia is passing out of Bessarabia. That must be said straight out; we must not lull ourselves with any sort of illusions." (Passages in brackets are not in my Russian text, but are in Cazacu's Roumanian translation.)

In connection with this, let me set the eloquent epilogue of Cazacu's "O Suta de Ani de Robie" (A Century of Serfdom), written in 1912:

"The Russians are now holding their celebration of a century of material possession of Bessarabia. But her spirit they do not possess, nor shall they ever possess it. In the celebration of the Russians, the Moldavians have no share except that of deep and painful silence. The whole Roumanian people feels this pain, and does not lose hope that Bessarabia, and with her the Roumanian people, will have a chance to celebrate in her turn



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the day of salvation. It will come. History repeats itself so often, and the historical maxim remains: Babylon was, the Empire of Alexander of Macedon was, the Roman Empire was, the Byzantine Empire was, and the time will come to say of other empires also—they were. Not so long ago was 1855 with the Crimea, and not so long ago was Port Arthur and Tzushima, and—Great is the Lord God of Hosts!—it will be again, surely it will be again!”

My own observation convinces me that these statements are justified. Kishineff in 1919 seemed quite like any Russian provincial city; the Roumanian element still seemed intrusive, though entirely at home in the country villages. But Kishineff in 1925 was clearly a Roumanian provincial capital, though still with a certain Russian flavor. I was reminded of the change in New Orleans in our generation; thirty years ago, the use of French on the streets was as little noticed as in Montreal. Now when you hear French spoken beside you in New Orleans, you observe it. In the same way, eight years ago you expected to hear Russian on the street in Kishineff; now, you expect to hear Roumanian—though in most cases, what you do (and did) hear is Yiddish. Roumanian has the great advantage (and this is true in Transylvania also) that it is a *lingua franca*—

the language of the nurses and servants, of the handy man about the place, of the farmer who comes in with vegetables; the children learn it, along with their parents' Russian or Hungarian; that explains why, alone of the Succession States, Roumania has not a single Member of Parliament, among the numerous Magyars, Germans, Bulgarians, Russians, Ukrainians, etc., who does not understand his country's official language. Russian will never die out in Bessarabia, especially as a knowledge of the language will be most valuable when trade relations with Russia again become lively; but Roumanian has always been the most widely diffused language in the province, and it is touching to see the eagerness with which parents are sending their children to school; 46% of all the children of school age were in school in 1924, as contrasted with 34% in 1921—both far higher percentages than were reached under the Russians, and remarkable under the difficulties of transportation and of finding suitable teachers; the Roumanians are still using many of the old Bessarabian teaching staff, whose knowledge of the language is quite elementary; but there are no others available (see pp. 292-3).

## CHAPTER XXV

### INCORPORATION INTO ROUMANIA

To return to our narrative: Bessarabia was now in a position (in spite of the strictures of the memorial quoted above) of comparative tranquillity, even if a tranquillity arising from exhaustion. The Diet worked hard over the agrarian problem, even hearing a committee of large land-owners; the Council of Directors spent busy months transacting the business of the province; the Committee on the Constitution cheerfully gathered material for a comparative study of constitutions out of which should arise the best possible constitution for Bessarabia. To be sure, commerce and banking were disorganized; administrative changes, and passive strikes on the part of Russian officeholders, disarranged all public business; the money kept depreciating and drought spoiled the excellent crop prospects.

Still, a *modus vivendi* was being worked out along the lines thus far indicated, when the whole external framework of Roumania had a kaleidoscopic change; the victorious Germans were humbled, and had to sue for peace. In Rou-

mania, the pro-German Marghiloman Ministry, whose great claim to gratitude was the reincorporation of Bessarabia into the Roumanian body politic, fell from power. The new administration had the triumph of uniting Transylvania, the Banat and the Bucovina with Roumania; and on Nov. 27 it called together the Bessarabian Diet to pass the agrarian legislation. We have already seen that the original statement of Dec. 2, 1917, was very radical, and contemplated the same total confiscation of property without compensation which took place in Russia itself. The bill now passed left to every boyar 250 acres of his estate, together with the house, vineyards and orchards; and the excess over 250 acres was paid for; indeed, in the case of foreign owners it was paid for in gold, which caused great dissatisfaction among the Bessarabians, who had to receive payment in depreciated paper money, and deferred payment at that, coming out to less than a dollar a hectare (2.47 acres).

The Greater Roumania now existing was a totally different entity from the country with which Bessarabia had united her destinies only a few months ago. That was even smaller than the Old Roumania of 1914, since the Transylvanian frontier had been pushed in by the Austro-



Hungarians, and the Dobrudja had been detached, to be administered by the Central Powers jointly. The problem of the relations of the newly annexed provinces—Transylvania, the Banat, the Bucovina, the enlarged Dobrudja, and Bessarabia—with one another and the Old Kingdom, was clearly a matter for a Constitutional Convention of Greater Roumania, the imminence of which was announced. Pending this, a Parliament of Greater Roumania should be elected, all the provinces participating. There was therefore no further need of separate constitutional conventions in the individual provinces, nor indeed of separate legislatures. So late in the night of Nov. 26-27, 1918, the Bessarabian Diet voted by acclamation to unite unconditionally with Roumania.

The Russian members of the Diet maintain that no quorum was present; I am assured by one of the Moldavian members present that there was. The question has now only an academic interest; at the time it marked the transfer of the pro-Russian efforts to Odessa, Moscow and Paris from Kishineff, which now became a Roumanian provincial city, second in size to Bucharest alone; indeed, it now contains well toward 300,000 people. Bessarabia had now entered upon a new political life, and Roumanian politicians scattered over

the province in the first universal suffrage campaign for Parliament the Bessarabians had ever known. Doubtless one of the chief reasons the Roumanians have had so little difficulty in Bessarabia, in spite of all the post-war economic drawbacks, was this new and unknown political life, which has brought scores of prominent Bessarabians into an arena they never knew before. Bessarabia has now participated in half a dozen elections for Parliament, and has in general cast her vote for the Opposition candidates. At a special election ("bye-election") held in Kishineff in June 1925, 12,000 out of 16,000 votes went to the opposition candidate, the venerable Alexandri, one of the signers of the petition of protest of Nov. 20, 1918. In fact, politics has been lively in Bessarabia ever since annexation; the election of Nov. 3-5, 1919, for the Constitutional Convention brought out 78.9% of the voters (a far higher percentage than we reach in the United States); 78 Roumanians, 4 Bulgarians, 3 Germans, 2 Ukrainians, one Russian, one Greek and one Jew were elected from Bessarabia. The campaigns vie with the best we ever have in mud-slinging and abuse; indeed, the Russians use as propaganda-documents against the Roumanian administration in Bessarabia, articles from opposition Rouma-

nian newspapers abusing the party in power as responsible for conditions in the province. Russia, Poland, Italy, Spain and Greece have discredited the Parliamentary system; in Roumania it is still rampant. This makes all the more remarkable the statement in Stephen Graham's "Dividing Line of Europe," 1925, p. 167: "There are no elections"; most thinking Bessarabians feel there are too many!

Meanwhile the Roumanian Government had been negotiating with the other Allies, to legitimate its occupation of Bessarabia. England and France took advantage of the occasion to do some hard bargaining; to quote Titulesco (Memorandum on the rôle of the League of Nations, the Reparation Commission and the Western States in the restoration of Eastern Europe as exemplified by Roumania, p. 34): "In return for the recognition of the union of Bessarabia and Roumania, Gt. Britain and France demanded the payment to their nationals of the price of expropriation necessitated by the agrarian reform in conditions other than those fixed for the other proprietors in Bessarabia. This obligation, which has now been carried out by Roumania in the form of the delivery of bonds of the consolidation loan of 1922, amounts to:

	Lei	£
For Gt. Britain . . . . .	6,990,615.25	277,184
For France . . . . .	31,904,401.80	638,087
Total . . . . .	<u>38,895,017.55</u>	<u>915,269</u>
Interest 1 Jan. 1919—		
Oct. 1922		<u>171,610</u>
		<u>1,086,879</u>

If one considers the mean rate of exchange for the lei, namely, 900 to the pound (and of course the leu fell after that. C.U.C.), the result is that 978,191,100 lei are payable instead of 22,086,400 lei (the total of the first valuation of the commission set up in conformity with the law), that is to say, an excess of about 950 million lei.”

The Bessarabian Treaty was finally signed on Oct. 28, 1920. Its provisions are:

“The British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, principal Allied Powers, and Roumania:

Considering that in the interest of general European peace it is of importance to ensure from now on over Bessarabia a sovereignty corresponding to the aspirations of the inhabitants, and guaranteeing to the racial, religious and linguistic minorities there the protection which is due them;

Considering that from the geographical, ethno-

graphic, historic and economic viewpoints, the union of Bessarabia to Roumania is fully justified;

Considering that the inhabitants of Bessarabia have manifested their desire to see Bessarabia united to Roumania;

Considering finally that Roumania has of her own free will the desire to give sure guarantees of liberty and of justice, without distinction of race, religion or language, in conformity with the Treaty signed at Paris Dec. 9, 1919, to the inhabitants of the former kingdom of Roumania, as well as to those of the territories newly transferred;

Have resolved to conclude the present treaty. . . :

Art. 1. The High Contracting Parties declare that they recognize the sovereignty of Roumania over the territory of Bessarabia, comprised within the present Roumanian frontier, the Black Sea, the course of the Dniester from its mouth to the point where it is cut by the former line between the Bucovina and Bessarabia, and this former line.

Art. 2. A commission composed of three members, one of whom shall be named by the principal Allied Powers, one by Roumania and one by the Council of the Society of Nations on account of Russia, shall be constituted within the fortnight following the putting in force of the present Treaty, to fix on the spot the new boundary line of Roumania.

Art. 3. Roumania binds herself to observe and cause to be observed rigorously on the territory of Bessarabia indicated in Art. 1, the stipulations of the Treaty signed at Paris, Dec. 9, 1919, by the principal Allied and Associated Powers and by Roumania, and notably to ensure there to the inhabitants without distinction of race, language or religion, the same guarantees of liberty and justice as to the other inhabitants of all other territories forming part of the kingdom of Roumania.

Art. 4. Roumanian nationality with full rights shall be acquired, to the exclusion of all other, by the subjects of the former Russian Empire established in the territory of Bessarabia as indicated in Art. 1.

Art. 5. Within the term of two years after the putting in force of the present treaty, the subjects of the former Russian Empire over 18 years of age and established in the territory of Bessarabia, as indicated in Art. 1, will have the right of choosing any other nationality that may be open to them. The husband's choice will carry with it the wife's, and the parents' choice will carry the children's under 18 years of age. Such persons as have exercised the right of choice above provided for, shall within the following twelvemonth move their domicile into the state in whose favour they have pronounced themselves. They shall be free to keep what real estate they possess on Roumanian soil. They may carry away with

them all their personal property of whatever description. No export duty shall be levied on them for this.

Art. 6. Roumania recognizes as Roumanian subjects, with full rights and without any formality, the subjects of the former Russian Empire who were born on Bessarabian territory, as indicated in Art. 1, of parents there domiciled, even though at the date when the present treaty enters into force, they themselves may not be there domiciled. However, within the two years following the putting into force of the present treaty, these persons may declare before the proper Roumanian authority in the country of their residence that they renounce Roumanian nationality, and they will then cease to be regarded as Roumanian subjects. In this respect the husband's declaration shall be considered valid for the wife, and the parents' declaration shall be considered valid for the children under 18 years of age.

Art. 7. The High Contracting Parties recognize that the Danube mouth known as the Kilia Channel should pass under the jurisdiction of the European Danube Commission.

While waiting for the conclusion of a general convention for the international regulation of watercourses, Roumania binds herself to apply to the portions of the Dniester River system which may be included within her bounds or which may form her frontiers, the regulations provided for

in the first paragraph of Art. 332 and in Arts. 333–338 of the Treaty of Peace with Germany of June 28, 1919.

Art. 8. Roumania will assume the responsibility of the proportional share falling to Bessarabia of the Russian Public Debt and of all other financial engagements of the Russian State, as shall be determined by a special convention between the principal Allied and Associated Powers on the one hand and Roumania on the other. This convention shall be prepared by a commission designated by the said powers. In case the commission does not reach an agreement within the term of two years, the points in question shall be immediately submitted to the arbitration of the Society of Nations.

Art. 9. The High Contracting Parties shall invite Russia to sign the present treaty, as soon as there shall exist a Russian Government recognized by them. They reserve the right to submit to the arbitration of the Council of the Society of Nations all questions that may be raised by the Russian Government concerning the details of this treaty. . . . The sovereignty of Roumania over the territories here comprised, shall not be called in question. All difficulties which may arise after the application of the treaty shall be handled in like manner.

The present treaty shall be ratified by the signatory powers. It shall not enter into force until



after the deposit of these ratifications and after the entry into force of the treaty signed by the principal Allied and Associated Powers and Roumania on Dec. 9, 1919. The deposit of the ratifications shall be carried out at Paris. The Powers with seat of government outside of Europe shall have the right to confine themselves to notifying the Government of the French Republic, through their diplomatic representative at Paris, that their ratification has been given, and in that case they will have to transmit the instrument as rapidly as may be. An attested statement of the deposit of ratification shall be drawn up. The French Government shall remit to all the signatory Powers a certified copy in conformity with the attested statement of the deposit of ratification.

Done at Paris, the twenty-eighth of October, one thousand nine hundred and twenty, in one sole copy which shall remain deposited in the archives of the Government of the French Republic, and of which authentic copies shall be remitted to each of the Powers signing the Treaty.”

The United States, in conformity with its original policy of not recognizing the smaller states created out of border Russia, does not admit the validity of this treaty; and it has not yet been ratified by either Japan or Italy.<sup>1</sup> In fact, an

<sup>1</sup> Italy ratified the treaty on March 8, 1927.

official statement in the Rome *Tribuna* of April 20, 1926, announced that the Italian Government had no intention of departing from its attitude, especially considering the close relations it had now been maintaining for some time with the Soviets. There was however a rather circumstantial rumor afloat in 1926, that Italy was trying to bring about a rapprochement between Roumania and the Soviets on this subject, and was projecting a trunk-line railroad between Spalato and Odessa, via Belgrade, Transylvania and Bessarabia, which would bring the Black Sea close to the Adriatic (see p. 275).

Russian committees in Odessa and Paris at once took up the fight to reassert Russian supremacy in Bessarabia; and the Soviet Government continues it.

The Russian viewpoint is perhaps best stated by Slonim, former member of the Provincial Diet, and an opponent of the Bolsheviks. I translate from his article in the "Volya Rossiya," III, 1924, p. 79, where he says:

"The Protocol was ratified first by England, and then, on March 11, 1924, by France. We shall not stop to inquire why France needed just then to ratify the Protocol, or what conditions she found it necessary to attach to the Roumanian gifts. Seriously speaking, we must consider all these

acts as having no binding force for Russia. Bessarabia was not even *conquered* by the Roumanians, and therefore could not be given to them on the score of conquest at the conclusion of the World War. In the course of the war Bessarabia was abstracted from Russia by the process of forcible seizure, and in addition the seizure was perpetrated not by enemies of Russia but by an ally of Russia in the war, and sanctioned by other allies. Russia does not recognize Bessarabia as an inalienable part of the Roumanian Kingdom. Russia, and every Russian, *continues to regard Bessarabia as a part of the territory of the Russian State*. From the fact that a part of the Russian territories has been occupied by foreign armies, there does not yet result a *right* to Bessarabia on the part of Roumania, nor a *renunciation* of Bessarabia on the part of Russia.

Bessarabia is a part of Russia; sooner or later there must come about her reunion with the Russian State. Along what lines can that take place? In deciding the Bessarabian question, three parties are interested: Roumania, Russia, and the inhabitants of the country itself. On this occasion the decisions were exclusively one-sided. They were brought about by the misrepresentation, under intimidation, of the inhabitants, and without the participation of Russia. Not a single Russian administration, unless it wishes to be a government of treason to the nation, would consent to

recognize those international acts which, in contravention of the Treaty of Paris of 1878, ignoring one of the important Powers which signed it—Russia—would establish a new sovereignty over Bessarabia. The “single front” on boundary questions, even to the Bolsheviks, held even by the Russian émigrés on the Bessarabian question, should force those diplomats to ponder who revel in illusions, as if Russian questions could be decided in London and Paris, in cloistered sessions of representatives of France, Italy, England and Japan.

The fortunes of Bessarabia can be decided by *agreement* between two of the parties concerned: Russia and Roumania. But all the Roumanian-Soviet conferences have shown that it is impossible to reach such agreement. The outcome of the last, the Vienna Conference, merely strengthens legitimate pessimism on this score. The break was due specifically to Bessarabia, for the Roumanian Government declared that it could not admit consideration of any question regarding the status of Bessarabia.

It would seem most natural of all, in view of such conditions, to ask the inhabitants of Bessarabia itself: do they wish to remain with Russia, or do they desire union with Roumania? *A plebiscite, organized by the League of Nations, with guarantees of freedom of suffrage, under stipulation of removal of the Roumanian troops, and tem-*

*porary administration of the country, until the termination of the plebiscite, by an International Commission, with representation of America and neutral countries*—that is the only just method now of deciding the question. The Russian Democracy proposes it not because it has any doubts of Russia's right to Bessarabia, or of the relations of the inhabitants to the Roumanians, but because without a plebiscite there is no *peaceful* means of disposing of the Bessarabian question. The present directors of European international life must thoroughly assimilate this fact. If no referendum of the inhabitants is organized in Bessarabia, there will come about a positive menace, to the effect that the Bessarabian question will be settled by a very dreadful and cruel means—force of arms. And so long as the Allied Powers are not inclined to reëxamine their relations to Bessarabia, and to yield to the Russian request for a plebiscite, along the Dniester will remain a focus of revolt and armed conflicts, threatening all Europe with disastrous convulsions."

The Roumanian attitude toward this proposed solution was that it was unnecessary, since the Provincial Diet did actually represent the country's wishes, and inadvisable, since it would single out one of the Russian border states for a plebiscite, disregarding all the others. But with the

passage of the years, this has become a purely academic question, and there seems to be little discussion of it, even in Russian quarters. It is generally understood that negotiations continue between Roumania and the Soviets, incidentally covering Bessarabia, which constitutes a valuable diplomatic asset—to the Roumanians because of their possession of it, to the Soviets because their threat of reoccupying it is a real menace to Roumania. The Soviets appear to have spent all the Roumanian government money and securities deposited at Moscow during the German-Austrian invasion of Roumania, and have thus lost this asset, with which they tempted the Roumanians in earlier negotiations; but they still possess the Roumanian government archives, and perhaps have not sold the manuscripts, works of art, etc., which were brought to Moscow from Jassy with the treasure,

## CHAPTER XXVI

### COMMUNIST MACHINATIONS

We now wish to describe the Bolshevik manoeuvres in Bessarabia, as unveiled by the Tatar-Bunar trial and an interesting book by an Inspector-General of the Roumanian Sigurantza (Secret Service), "Mishcarea Subversivă în Bessarabia" (The Subversive Movement in Bessarabia), Z. I. Husărescu, Kishineff, State Printing Office, 1925.

The Bolshevik policy has been to foment everywhere rebellion of the proletariat and destruction of the land-owning and capitalistic class, especially in adjoining countries. Their propaganda was especially easy in Bessarabia, where there is no boundary but a river, frozen over in winter; no marked difference in the peasantry on either side of the line; and many thousands of Russian refugees, among whom their emissaries would not be remarked. The Bessarabian peasants, in spite of the dividing up of the estates, felt keenly the economic effects of the war and the new boundaries. Their rubles had depreciated enormously, nor were they properly appreciative when the

Roumanian Government took them in exchange for lei at a higher rate than they were intrinsically worth; farm labor was scarce and high, communications bad, railroad rates dear and service poor, commodities hard to find and very expensive; across the Dniester, their fellow-peasants had seized the land without paying anything for it, while they had to content themselves with only part of the boyars' estates, had to pay something for that, and must pay rent till all the legal formalities were carried out; new laws, regulations and officials had come in, often lacking in tact or even honesty (though we have seen that that was no new thing in Bessarabia); their first harvest after the union was a disappointment; and speculation, in which some politicians took a hand, was rampant everywhere. So discontent was widespread in the crucial period that followed the annexation. The Bolshevists took advantage of this. They had organized in Kishineff during the incumbency of the Diet; and in April 1918, they elected as their president Ivan Krivorukoff of Bender, who is now one of the governing board of the Autonomous Moldavian Socialist Soviet Republic across the Dniester. Their organization was so thorough that they soon had a force of 2000 well-armed men in the county of Kishineff, ready to seize their weapons at a moment's notice from



the Soviets. In one ward of Kishineff they had 150 men, with 2 machine-guns, 20 rifles and 40 revolvers; in another, 50 men, with 30 rifles and 20 revolvers. According to instructions from Russia, these forces were to be used for surprise attacks, the murder of superior officers, the seizure of supplies and ammunition, when the revolution should break out. Enormous use has been made of proclamations and manifestoes, partly printed in Russia (both in Russian, Ukrainian and Roumanian), but mainly in secret local printing-establishments. Before the Hotin uprising, e. g., they distributed manifestoes beginning as follows: "Workers and peasants, from the rivers of blood of the old world and the ruins of the imperialist war is growing a new socialist body. We, workers and peasants of Bessarabia, are beginning the fight for the establishment of the power of the Soviets, so that they alone may have power over the land and the factories. The outer front has now changed to an inner front of civil war; but the Roumanian soldier will not raise his bayonet for the revolutionary movement." But the Moldavian peasant was not impressed. This conservatism of the Roumanian peasant, poor material for Bolshevism, is the more remarkable when one remembers the receptivity of the Bulgarian peasant. So these manifestoes and organizations were not

successful at first. An attempt at revolt was made in the county of Ismail in November 1918, but it found no following. The Bolsheviks then decided to undertake a more serious campaign in the largely Ukrainian county of Hotin, to break out in the spring of 1919. This too was bungled, largely through over-organization. There were not merely local Bolshevik committees, the Central Bessarabian Committee at Kishineff, the Odessa Committee, but also a new Bessarabian Revolutionary Committee at Moghileff in Podolia, which called itself the Bessarabian Directorate. This last organization acted precipitately and without warning the Central Committee; after a distribution of manifestoes early in January 1919, armed bands were sent in from Podolia at midnight Jan. 10, O.S., and it took ten days' fighting and the death of Gen. Stan Poetash before the invaders were driven back and the local Bolshevik uprising quelled. That was done so thoroughly, however, that the head of the Bessarabian section in the Central Bolshevik Committee in Kieff reported to the Kishineff Central Committee that "Rakovsky himself is inclined to let Bessarabia stay Roumanian," and the Kishineff Provincial Committee sent a delegate to Kieff to recommend that no further attempt be made for the present at armed rebellion, but that all effort be con-

centrated on propaganda, so as to prepare the ground for a bloodless revolution. This fitted in with the program of the leading Russian Bolsheviks, whose ideas were expressed by an article in the "Izvestia" to the effect that Bessarabia would become Bolshevik the moment the rest of Russia did; they counted also on Ukrainian irredentism, and indeed Petliura did all he could in the Hotin region to bring about union with the Ukraine.

But in March 1919 the Russian kaleidoscope changed again. The Allied forces abandoned Russia definitely to the Bolsheviks; Petliura was driven out of the Ukraine, and his smartly dressed officers became familiar sights in Roumanian cafés; the German, French and Italian Communists won unexpected victories; Bulgaria fell in with the current, and Bela Kun turned Hungary into a Communist Paradise. The Russian Communists had their heads turned. They foresaw absorption of Poland and Roumania into a great Bolshevik state, which should extend on the west to Germany, Italy and Bulgaria. So once again they poured men and money in Bessarabia. On April 22, 1919, a secret Bolshevik Congress was held in Kishineff, which chose a delegation to go to Kieff for money for armament, and which brought out a manifesto, distributed all over Bessarabia,

which said: "The end approaches of the domineering Roumanian despotic authorities and of the bourgeois classes. The soldiers of the Soviets have defeated the Hatman of the Ukraine, and have reached the boundaries of Bessarabia. It is not hard to see the end of the fight. Imitating Russia, the revolution has broken out in Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria, and the hour of the Roumanian Revolution is at hand. The international situation obliges us to make every sacrifice to establish Soviet authority in Bessarabia. Accordingly the Bolshevist Party calls the Bessarabian Workers and Peasants to a struggle organized against the authorities of the dominant classes, and for the success of the struggle it orders: 1) a state of war in every county; 2) the committees to take up the creation of Soviets of delegates of Workers and Peasants, to take possession of the public institutions and administration of their respective localities; 3) the Revolutionary Military Committee to come in touch with the Ukrainian armies across the Dniester, to coördinate operations; 4) the uprising to begin only upon orders from the local revolutionary committee; no credence is to be given to any misleading orders which may be issued deceitfully by the Roumanian authorities; 5) the Revolutionary Committee to blow up com-

munications, so as to hinder retreat and shipment of valuables by the Roumanians; 6) constant agitation to be carried on among the enemy's soldiers, to demoralize them."

The uprising was to begin in May 1919; several Bessarabian regiments were formed in the Ukraine, and all former soldiers and officers (up to the age of 50) were mobilized along the frontier, with headquarters at Tiraspol, opposite Bender. There were however many desertions, and other difficulties, which caused the Committee to request from the Military Council at Odessa a postponement till July. This was granted all the more readily in that it would coincide with Bela Kun's Communist attack on Roumania from the west, for which he had been accumulating troops and cannon ever since his successful experiment with the Czecho-Slovaks. Through the influence of Hungarian propaganda, we have been taught to regard this campaign along the Theiss as an unprovoked descent of the Roumanians on a defenseless foe—an especially amusing perversion of the truth, since it involves support of Bolshevism; for the actual facts, see chapter XVIII of my "Greater Roumania."

In spite of these careful preparations, hotheads again precipitated matters, and an attack was made on Bender (Tighina) from Tiraspol, with

troops and machine-guns, the night of May 26, 1919; the French frontier post was driven back, but a Roumanian regiment which was hurriedly brought up, succeeded in driving the invaders back. Rakovsky now took more direct control, and together with military preparations, appointed a whole Bessarabian administration, to be installed immediately after the Revolution. This however was a false step. The Kishineff Provincial Committee, which had its eye on the offices, protested at once, characterizing the proposed administration as the result of "lobbying in interested quarters," and several of its members as "without character or impartiality, or fitness for the high offices assigned them." Indeed, the Committee appointed its own ticket, but called it the Bessarabian Revolutionary Center.

In July, everything seemed ripe. Bela Kun had massed his six divisions along the Theiss, opposite the two Roumanian divisions stationed there; the Ukraine was in Bolshevik hands; the Roumanian Socialists planned a general strike; Bessarabia was reported to be in a ferment of discontent. The blow was dealt. In a brief note, the Soviets demanded of the Roumanian Government:

- 1) the immediate evacuation of the Roumanian Army and officials from the whole of Bessarabia;
- 2) that all the Bessarabian leaders should be

handed over for judgment to a people's court; 3) that all property belonging to Russia and the Ukraine be restored to them. "The Socialist Workers' Governments of the Ukraine and Russia will wait 48 hours for a clear and precise answer regarding the acceptance of the conditions; in contrary case, they reserve themselves full liberty of action as regards Roumania.

Telestchenko, Commissioner of the Russian People for Foreign Affairs.

Rakovsky, President of the Commissioners of the People of the Ukrainian Socialist Republic."

There never was a more complete fiasco than this Bessarabian Revolution. The Roumanian Secret Service immediately arrested the President and Secretary of the Provincial Communist Committee; the President of the Provincial Revolutionary Military Committee; the Presidents of three of the ward organizations in Kishineff; the Commander of the Jewish Battalion; the printer for the Provincial Committee; and the members of all the county committees. Touch with the Ukraine was lost before it was established. The Odessa Committee vacillated for six or seven weeks, and then decided to send a number of its best propagandists, provided with false papers, to Kishineff. They followed three different routes,

met in Kishineff, effected a weak reorganization, and were engaged in trying to get their comrades out of jail by means of bribes, when the Roumanian Secret Service laid hands on them all. That was the end of the Bessarabian Revolution.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### COMMUNIST REORGANIZATION

This colossal failure confirmed the Russian Bolshevist element which held that a long period of preparatory propaganda was necessary. So a new organization was effected, with headquarters in Kishineff; it worked out a much more thorough system, embracing in each case a secretariat, an information bureau (espionage) and a propaganda and agitation service. It had its own Red Cross (as the Bulgarians also learned to their sorrow), later called the M.O.P.R. (Mezhdunarodnoye Obshtchestvo Pomoshtchi Revolucioneram, International Society for the Aid of Revolutionaries). The M.O.P.R. was successful in bribing a Kishineff prison warden to let Communist prisoners escape; failing in a similar attempt at Jassy, it engaged four Roumanian Communists to capture a police justice and force him to give written or telephonic instructions for the release of the chief local conspirator, recently imprisoned. Special pains were taken with the choice of couriers, whose business was to carry orders, arms and ammunition from Russia into

Bessarabia; and all sorts of ingenious devices were carried out to protect them. The Communists of the Jewish Bund of Kishineff, e. g., forged certificates of school membership, which were as good as passports in the hands of young couriers in school uniform, and were actually exchanged abroad for genuine certificates of membership in the student body of a foreign school or university. Some of the documents found on these couriers are of the highest interest; one long letter, found in January 1922, rolled up in the hollow of a cane used by a Communist student in the University of Czernowitz who acted as courier between the Comsomol (Young Communists' Association) of Czernowitz and that of Ismail, urges the utilization of all efforts, whether in harmony with Communism or not, against the Roumanians; even nationalistic, irredentist manifestations of the Ukrainians, "though by nature they run counter to our program, yet where they are directed against the Roumanians—e. g., against the gendarmes, the tax-collectors, the secret service—we should foment and take advantage of, for they may be of great assistance."

Special stress was laid on terrorism. A terrorist school was established in Odessa, whose graduates were sent in trios into Bessarabia, the first trio beginning work in May 1921. Each trio

operated independently. On arriving at the locality designated, they investigated where most damage could be done, and tried to affiliate themselves with responsible elements in the town, so as to implicate them, or at least involve them in difficulties afterward; then, after suitable preparation, they blew up the gendarmerie barracks, the town hall, the electric light works, a railroad bridge, according to circumstances, knowing that the Roumanian authorities would make wholesale arrests in their investigations, and counting shrewdly on this also as likely to embitter relations between the Roumanian authorities and the townspeople; the cleverness of this perverted psychology was well shown in the Tatar-Bunar case. Of course they operated primarily in those districts of Bessarabia which were least Roumanian, and where the new Roumanian bureaucracy and police would be least popular.

Study of the documents and episodes connected with this Communistic campaign in Bessarabia, is most enlightening. Here are a few items, which will show the situation the Roumanians had to deal with. In 1923, on April 17, train no. 337, from Kishineff to Tighina (Bender), was attacked by a Russian band armed with rifles and machine-guns, near the station of Bolboca; four persons were killed and 7 wounded. On the 19th, an

armed band attacked the post of gendarmes at Sărătzica-Nouă (a town of 3500, situated about 20 miles from the railroad station of Schinoasa), killing one of the gendarmes on duty and disarming the other; other gendarmes gathered and pursued the Russians, three of whom were killed and two captured, with a loss of one gendarme fatally wounded. On the night of the 25th, an armed and masked band attacked the village of Varticăuți (about 15 miles from Hotin), and after robbing various houses, threw hand-grenades into the gendarme-barracks; they were finally driven off, with the loss of two gendarmes. On July 14th, the gendarmes of Voluntirovca, a town of 12,000 about 40 miles from Akkerman, captured two Russian terrorists, C. Boshnok and Emil Popoff, in the house of a local Communist, after a fight resulting in the death of a Roumanian soldier. On Oct. 18, four terrorists armed with rifles and hand-grenades, made their way into the Soroca hospital and rescued a notorious terrorist, Isaiah Sudacovce, who was lying there sick before trial for a recent crime. In 1924, on Feb. 9, the village of Vanez witnessed an attack on its station of gendarmes, one of whom was killed. On May 6, a band of 16 Russians, armed with machine-guns and hand-grenades, held up the village of Ciuciulea, 25 miles from Baltz, and in the ensuing

fight, five Russians and three gendarmes were killed. On June 23, a similar engagement took place near Cepeleutzi, about 40 miles from Hotin, with the loss of three Russians and two gendarmes. The night of Aug. 4, a frontier post of the 13th Infantry (County of Hotin) was attacked by a band in Russian uniforms, with hand-grenades and machine-guns; but the Russians were beaten off without any Roumanian fatalities. On Aug. 9th, another border patrol, opposite Vadul-lui-Voda, was attacked by a dozen Russians, and two frontier-guards were killed. Three evenings later, another band crossed the Dniester near the same spot, looted a country-place, killing the owner's wife and two other women, and went back into Russia with their plunder. The next night (Aug. 13) a band of 150 armed cavalry crossed the Dniester some 25 miles from Hotin and plundered the village of Ianoutzi; as they went back, a Roumanian cavalry patrol overtook them, and in the fighting, two Roumanians were injured. On the evening of the 16th, along the forest of Zelena, 15 miles from Hotin, a couple of Roumanian gendarmes who were taking two terrorists just arrested, to Lipcani, were attacked by a Russian squad, who killed one gendarme and went off with the terrorists. Similar incidents take place even yet, and give a sporting interest

to army service in Bessarabia near the border. Gen. Rudeanu told me, in the spring of 1925, that he still received reports from along the Dniester three times every night; and in speeding to the border after a night alarm shortly before, his car had been ditched, and his chauffeur and he injured. One alarm, however, proved less serious. Word came in that Soviet troops were assembling on a wrecked bridge over the Dniester; then the astounding fact was telephoned that part of the soldiers wore Roumanian uniforms. But soon the mystery was solved. Cameras and a "movie" director appeared, and a lively "Roumanian attack" was staged and repulsed, to flicker at once on the screen all over Soviet Russia, as testimony to the patriotic vigilance of the Soviet Frontier Guard!

While the military arm was engaged in preventing and repulsing raids, the secret service was busy running down the machinations of Bolshevik conspirators. These kept establishing nuclei in Bessarabian towns and villages; the Communist emissaries from Russia founded groups of propagandists and of terrorists, with stocks of weapons and explosives as well as of documents—all carefully organized, and directed by "orders from across the Dniester"—the uniform reply given to the police by those captured

by the detectives, when asked the reasons for their actions. In Husărescu's "Mishcareă Subversivă," one has an imposing summary of the chief discoveries, with photographs of conspirators, documents and weapons. One of the most interesting episodes is that of October 1925, worth following in detail. Word had come to Capt. Buznea, of the 14th Infantry, in Baltz, and to the special secret service officer on duty there, that Theodore Gherman, head of a notorious Communist band, was in hiding in a hovel in the village of Lencăuți, 20 miles from Hotin. They were given ten gendarmes, under the command of Lieut. Părvulescu, distinguished in the capture of the famous bandits Tomescu and Munteanu, whose exploits filled the Roumanian papers during the summer of 1925. They succeeded in arresting Gherman, who finally directed them to an empty bee-hive, in which they found his documents, manifestoes, etc., and to a chicken-coop, which sheltered a Russian rifle and revolver and two hand-grenades. He implicated a fellow-townsmen named Ivan Hulca, on whose premises were found a light Lewis machine-gun with abundant ammunition, hand-grenades and other explosives. The trail now leading to the village of Chirilovca, they arrested there a terrorist named Basil Vlasoff; Gherman convincing him that the game was up, he

directed the Roumanians to a corner of his barn, where they found twenty Russian army rifles, another light machine-gun, fifteen French hand-grenades, quantities of ammunition both for rifles and machine-guns, and a barbed-wire cutter. From Vlasoff they learned that the guiding spirit of the local terrorists was a certain Alexis Shandranovitch, former lieutenant in the Russian Army. Capt. Buznea dressed himself as a Russian refugee, and sought out Shandranovitch in the village of Polmedicăuți; he introduced himself as a Soviet inspector, giving the password he had learned from Vlasoff. Shandranovitch reported that all was going well, and that he had succeeded in hiding 100 rifles in Văscăuți, at the house of a certain Glovaski. Hereupon Lieut. Părvulescu and his squad of gendarmes came upon them and arrested them both, carrying off the supposed Soviet inspector to a separate room for his examination. On learning the news from Capt. Buznea, Lieut. Părvulescu, with his chief, Maj. Hertza, proceeded at once to Glovaski's home, but found that word had already reached him and that he had fled across the Dniester. His father maintained that the charge was false, and after a fruitless four-hour search of the house, the officers were inclined to agree with him; but in investigating an old-fashioned brick bake-oven,



they discovered that the flooring sounded hollow. Removing some of the brick, they found an underground store-room beneath the oven, from which they took out thirty Russian army rifles, sixty hand-grenades, four large bombs, ten small bombs, four boxes of dynamite and abundance of other explosives and ammunition.

At the same time, interesting discoveries were being made in Kishineff itself. On August 31, 1925, the town was plastered with Russian posters, urging a revolution and the rescue of the innocent victims of Roumanian persecution at Tatar-Bunar. It took the authorities nearly a month to run down the instigator. On Sept. 20, they arrested a young Jewish printer named Abraham Finchel (Finkel), who, though only 20, was President of the local Comsomol, and had been sentenced in 1924 to serve five years for distributing inflammatory May-Day circulars, but had escaped. A search of his rooms yielded nothing suspicious until investigation of a commode disclosed a false bottom, with most important papers. By ingenious use of the information gleaned from these, the authorities succeeded in getting a list of the members of the Comsomol from young Finchel, and the information that he was responsible to the former Communist Regional Director, Ignatoff, who was now established at Balta as a Com-

missioner of the Moldavian Soviet Republic, and guided the work in Bessarabia from there. Each Bessarabian county (judetz) was divided into four districts, and each of them into four sections, each with its chief. Ignatoff (who was later captured and condemned on Nov. 12, 1926, to five years' imprisonment) had left as his successor a young law student named Iurie Ganeff, from Ismail; his chief aides were Eleonora Vilderman, daughter of a wealthy Jewish family, and a certain Reinerman, in whose home were found two trunks full of revolutionary manifestoes. None of the 23 members of the Comsomol arrested was over 25 years of age, and some were only 19. The Communist headquarters for Roumania, according to Finchel, was at Târg-Muresh, in Transylvania, and the leader one "Vericash," a Hungarian formerly associated with Bela Kun. The authorities at once searched the latter's home and were successful in finding the complete lists of the Communist organization, as a result of which arrests were made all over Bessarabia early in October 1925. Especially interesting was the proof of the part taken by the M.O.P.R. (see p. 249) in providing funds for the defense of the Bessarabian Communists, partly by the sale of stamps showing a bloody hand stretched out between prison bars. Undeterred, the Communists

established another headquarters in Târg-Muresh, discovered and raided in March 1926.

In April 1926, a certain Ilie Samsonoff was captured entering Bender from the Ukraine, after a revolver fight, with documents proving his connection with a Communist organization in Bender. In the same month, after a session of ten weeks, the military court of the Third Army Corps handed in its verdict in the case of the 63 Communists, mainly from Kishineff—the Finkel case, described above. Five Communists—Abraham Finkel, Bernard Zuckermann, Willy Gesler, Giuseppe Sbratz and Michael Iosif—were condemned to five years' imprisonment, and others to lesser terms; 22 were acquitted. In August 1926, some Kishineff students at the University of Prague were discovered to be delegates of the Soviet Center of Espionage in Vienna, and in process of forming a new Soviet organization in Bessarabia. In mid-December 1926, a clash occurred near Bender; a boatload of arms and ammunition was captured by the Roumanians from the Bolsheviks who were attempting to smuggle it in, and defended themselves with machine-guns, when surprised. Thus the Communist effort continues.

The reader must not be misled, however, into thinking that anything approaching a state of

war exists along the Dniester. I was impressed, in traveling scores of miles along the border in the spring of 1925, with the perfect tranquility which reigned, not only there but all through the country; and in general relations seemed not only correct but cordial between the opposing pickets. The Soviet cavalry and infantry border patrol waved us friendly greetings across the stream, whenever we saw them. I note exactly the same thing in the report, in the Bucharest *Universul* of April 23, 1926, of the trip of Mr. R. B. Hinckley, of our Legation, along the river: "The American diplomat, before undertaking his trip through Bessarabia, had the impression that the frontier with the Soviets constituted a battle-front, on which incidents were continually arising; and he was greatly surprised, and even affected, to see our sentinels, as well as those of the Soviets, promenading most peacefully opposite each other, and even exchanging friendly salutations." And Minister Culbertson, in the Paris *Temps*, bears witness to the same peace and quiet in July 1926.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE TATAR-BUNAR EPISODE

The last chapter will, I hope, have made clear the events leading up to the "Rebellion of Tatar-Bunar," and the atmosphere in which it took place. We have seen that Bessarabia was honeycombed with revolutionary organizations, financed and directed from Soviet Russia. These exploited the post-war economic and political difficulties of the country, the mistakes of the new régime, all forms of discontent, intensified by financial stagnation and the drought; and indiscreet or corrupt Roumanian officials and officers played into their hands. Bessarabia has been under martial law ever since the annexation, with censorship and all other forms of government interference with normal life. I think no reader of the last chapter will fail to admit the necessity of these measures; but overzealous or incompetent administrators, both military and civil, have greatly complicated the task. One has only to think of the episode of Good Friday, 1925, when, at Zguritzza, 20 miles from Soroca, Deputy Pan Halippa of Soroca, former President of the

Diet, and Roumanian Minister, was struck by a lieutenant of gendarmes for alleged unpatriotic utterances; of the testimony in the trial, in November–December 1925, of Lieut. Morărescu, showing much highhandedness and arbitrariness in the army in Bessarabia; of the action of the commandant of gendarmes at Soroca, on April 11, 1926, in keeping out of the city Pan Halippa and Cazaciu, both former deputies from Soroca; and the arrest and transfer to Jassy of the ex-deputy Ion Codreanu, in June 1926. These and other similar incidents were utilized by the Soviet propagandists in Bessarabia itself, and, often in highly exaggerated form, in the outside world. I was amused to read, in a wireless dispatch from Vienna of Dec. 16, 1925, to the *New York Times*, a story of the Roumanian commander in the Bessarabian city of Edinitza (Hotin) raising his cap on a pole and forcing everyone to salute it, under penalty of corporal punishment—a story taken from Krupensky and Schmidt's "Summary of Events in Bessarabia" (p. 12), submitted to the Peace Conference in 1919! The Tatar-Bunar episode gave the Soviet authorities an admirable pretext for flooding the world with anti-Roumanian literature, successful in convincing many earnest social reformers that a great injustice was being done innocent Roumanian peasants by

an arbitrary and cruel reactionary government. In fact, a group of French Liberals, headed by Romain Rolland, in November 1925, sent a telegram to Bucharest, during the trial, urging the acquittal of the "nearly five hundred innocent defendants"; and the headline "A Roumanian Massacre" appeared in one of the great London dailies. Roumania always has a "bad press," and never more than in the Tatar-Bunar affair.

I was given a circumstantial account of the raid by a Roumanian official in an adjoining district, who went to Tatar-Bunar immediately after the tragedy, and took part in the preliminary investigations. I have checked up this account with the official summary, and with the dispatches in the opposition papers in Bucharest. For a military trial—against which, as an old-fashioned American, I have a strong prejudice—I must admit that much latitude was given the defense, and that distinguished Bucharest lawyers like Costa-Foru and Eliad-Românul spoke as boldly and effectively as in the civil courts. Costa-Foru's speech, together with a bitter attack on the Secret Service, was published in 1926, both in Roumanian ("Abuzurile shi crimele Sigurantzei generale a Statului"—The Abuses and Crimes of the State General Secret Service) and in German (at Vienna: "Aus den Folterkammern Rumäniens.

Dokumente und Enthüllungen über die Verbrechen der Rumänischen "Sigurantza" . . . von C. G. Costa-Foru, Generalsekretär der Rumänischen Liga für Menschenrechte"). This brochure, and testimony given at the trial, indicate that the third degree was administered in some cases by the gendarmes, and injustice done in others through the demoralization and panic of the days following the uprising. Nevertheless in general I feel that the dispassionate observer will grant that the Government proved its case, and that the Tatar-Bunar rebellion was simply the most striking example of a Communist raid, engineered from without, like those I have already instanced, and not a local revolution against intolerable conditions due to Roumanian oppression, as it was represented to be by the Socialist press everywhere.

Tatar-Bunar is a center of about 10,000 people, in a hilly country some forty miles southwest of Akkerman. There was a Tartar village here up to 1769; the modern town was settled in 1816, chiefly with Russian and Bulgarian colonists, who built their houses largely with stone from a ruined castle near by; being in the center of a flourishing farming country, it gradually became an important business town, though twelve miles from the railroad. The Roumanian Gazetteer of 1923



credits it with eight primary schools, one higher school and one gymnasium, Orthodox, Lipovan and Protestant churches, two Jewish synagogues, 32 liquor-shops, a dispensary and a pharmacy. Its central location and mixed Russian—Jewish population made it a good headquarters for the Communist campaign in Southern Bessarabia. This was entrusted by the Odessa Central Office to an able organizer, Andrew Kulshnikoff, known as Nenin, and Nicholas Sishman, both revolutionaries since 1918. Nenin went back and forth from Odessa during 1924, and established some 30 Communist centers depending upon Tatar-Bunar, including the cities of Cahul and Ismail. Other centers were established in the smaller Russian villages, each of which had a Communist committee, and a “fighting detachment” of 30 men, for whom arms and ammunition were smuggled in from Russia. During the summer of 1924, Nenin reported to Odessa that the foundations were all laid, and that military operations might commence. The Central Committee thereupon appointed as Military Commander in Southern Bessarabia, a certain Ossip Poliakoff (known as Platov, Platoff), a Russian Bessarabian fisherman from Vâlcov, on the lower Danube, and an able and determined man. He issued an order of the day (apparently in July or August 1924; I can-

not read the date in the facsimile published in Tataresco's "Bessarabie et Moscou"), stating that all preparations were completed in certain named sectors, and Nenin was organizing others; that all comrades must be ready for a concerted attack; and that he sends a medal of Lenin to each comrade; that the entire program up to the attack will be communicated to them, either by Nenin or himself, who receive them "directly from the center" (i. e., Odessa). Arms and ammunition were brought in by water, and either distributed to the chief conspirators, or held on rafts in the reedy lakes so abundant in the south, to be passed out at the time of the uprising. There was found on Nenin's body a letter from Platov (published by Tataresco in legible facsimile and accurate French translation), which gives an excellent idea of the preparations made: "Comrade Nenin! I send some rifles to be distributed in the lowlands of Ismail, Bolgrad and Cahul. I think that 300 bombs will be enough to supply three subsections, and that we shall be able to arrange the transportation to several other points, as need arises. Send the guns to the same destination. I send you three poods (108 lbs.) of explosives and accessories. Distribute them to the proper persons in Reni, Bolgrad and Plashticova; you will distribute the shears to the

three subsections, and the keys (kliutchi) to the men in Reni, Bolgrad and Plashticova. Comrade Nenin! I have received word that at Ismaïl there are 5000 Roumanian troops. I had asked to have every town and village have its information officer. If as yet they have not been appointed, I ask to have them named without fail and urgently, with instructions to get accurate information, in accordance with my instructions of August 12, 1924. Please send me word about the distribution of the Roumanian troops. I had asked you to come with Comrade Stantzenco to work out plans, but to bring also, when you come, the necessary information, without which it is hopeless to try and accomplish anything. I expect you Sunday evening. If you can meet me at the rendezvous, let me know in ample season. I only ask of you not to hold me here to no purpose. I have disposed of the rifles and am free and ready to travel, but I must work out this plan, and that is why I beg you to hurry and come with all possible information, without forgetting what I mentioned in my instructions under date of August 19, 1924. Military Commander of Southern Bessarabia, I. Platov."

About the beginning of September 1924, the Communists felt sufficiently prepared to try a raid on a small scale, useful to test popular feeling, and

also to secure supplies, especially of clothing and food, for the recruits they were hiding in the Vâlcov and Jibrienî marshes, largely Roumanian deserters of Russian race. They chose Nikolaïevca, a little village about 45 miles from Ismail. On Sept. 11, an armed band of about a score, commanded by a notorious Communist, Ivan Bejan (known as Pugatcheff or Koltzoff), and composed partly of deserters, seized the village, which they isolated by cutting the telegraph and telephone wires, and then looted. They killed the mayor in the town-hall, the bullet passing through his body and killing a peasant behind him; having set the building on fire, they went to his home and killed his wife; meeting a patrol of gendarmes, they shot both of them; requisitioning carts from peasants on their way to market, they filled them with the stock of the various stores; and then Pugatcheff harangued the townspeople, telling them that he had been sent from Russia to inaugurate the Revolution.

Meanwhile Nenin had summoned a council at Tatar-Bunar, which met Sept. 14; Nenin notified his hearers that Russia was ready for war, and that the general attack on Bessarabia was about to commence. The next night, another council was held, arms distributed, and the last orders given; four groups were formed, one of which,



(From an old print)

QUARANTINE STATION OF SCULANI, JULY 24, 1837

[www.dacoromanica.ro](http://www.dacoromanica.ro)

under the Communist Gregory Cernenko, attacked the gendarme post, killing the commander and two privates; another went to the town-hall and shot the secretary. The wires were cut and sentinels posted to prevent anyone leaving town; then the bells were rung, signal for a gathering of the townspeople. Nenin requisitioned horses and carts, and issued orders for the mobilization of the contingents of 1920, 1921 and 1922; standing on a table taken from the town-hall, he informed the people that the Moldavian Soviet Republic had been proclaimed in Bessarabia, and that two regiments of Russian cavalry were due at noon, one coming from Bender and one from Akkerman. Red flags were ordered to be hung on all buildings; cash in the tax-office and the post-office was confiscated; the funds found in the latter (128,000 lei) were divided among the postal employees after a Soviet system, as pay for September—5000 to the postmaster, and 25,000 to each of the subordinates.

Nenin now took steps for the defense of Tatar-Bunar, and for spreading the rebellion. One group went north to Acmanghit, a town of 5000 people five miles away; the commander of the Roumanian gendarme post went to the near-by German village of Sarata and raised a volunteer force of forty Germans, which opened fire early

on the 16th, and fought with the Communists for a couple of hours, till word reached the latter that Roumanian troops were coming, and they retired to Tatar-Bunar. Two companies from the garrison of Akkerman were actually on their way, gathering up peasant volunteers as they came, and by the bridge between Tatar-Bunar and Acmanghit shot the Communist agent second in command, Koltzoff. Meanwhile Nenin had gone to Cishmeaua Rusă, a Russian-Ruthenian village of 4000, where much war material had been stored by Andrew Stantzenco, one of the chief organizers. This was already under fire from Roumanian troops, coming from the west; in the early morning of the 17th, Nenin decided to retire to Tatar-Bunar. Hard fighting went on in and around Tatar-Bunar all day Sept. 17th; and at night, Nenin issued orders for his forces, now reduced to about 200 men, to retreat south to the town of Nerusai, where his aide Leonte Tzurcan had been stirring up revolt, with the help of a large stock of concealed weapons.

But no sooner had the dawn of the 18th come, than the sound of heavy cannon was heard, and Nenin gave up the fight. He ordered his men to retreat to Galileshti and try to reach the Black Sea at a point called Volcioc. On the way, a Roumanian frontier patrol of only 20 men had the

intrepidity to attack them, and kept up firing till their ammunition gave out and they were captured and disarmed; but a larger detachment of Roumanian troops soon caught up with the Communists, and captured 120 of them. Nenin and his aide Justin Batishtcheff had escaped in an automobile, but beyond Galileshti they abandoned the car and hid in the corn-fields. While Nenin was asleep, Batishtcheff went off with his grip containing 200,000 lei, all that was left of the loot of Tatar-Bunar; when he awoke, he took to the salt-marshes, and on Sept. 19th, a gendarme shot and fatally wounded him.

The "Rebellion of Tatar-Bunar" was over, and the Roumanian government at once undertook the formidable task of ascertaining responsibility, and dividing the innocent from the guilty—a task much lightened by the papers found on Nenin and the other conspirators, and by the secret service records, but which lasted nearly a year. The trial was opened at Kishineff on August 24, 1925, and lasted till December 2nd; the government's dossier contained about 70,000 pages, and the final verdict, 180. At the outset, over 500 persons were arrested and examined, of whom 279 were held for trial. The Soviet Government, while disclaiming all connection with the affair, took a keen interest in it, and as early as June 16, 1925,



M. Costa-Foru, lawyer for the defense, received the following telegram from Moscow: "Moscow, no. 116188, 15/6, 15:30. Roumania, Bucharest, Costa-Foru, Alea Patriarchiei no. 3. The President of the International Juridical Bureau, in the name of the lawyers of the different countries, expresses to you their sentiment of gratitude for your courageous defense of the militant workers of Roumania. We are convinced that in this case organized by the Secret Service against those 500 Tatar-Bunar peasants, you will take the measures necessary for defense, in order to save the lives of those innocent victims of the unprecedented administrative terrorism of Bessarabia. The President of the International Juridical Bureau salutes warmly, in your person, all courageous and honorable representatives of the Roumanian intelligentsia. With fraternal salutations, President of the International Juridical Bureau." This represents the official Russian attitude, which was spread everywhere by their publicity service; Labor Parties all over the world joined in protests, and the Roumanians found themselves as generally execrated as at the time of Bela Kun's invasion of Transylvania.

The final verdict, in July 1926, cleared all but 85 of the defendants, the majority of whom were condemned to prison terms running from 6

months to 6 years; two were condemned to 15 years' forced labor, and Justin Batishtcheff, Nenin's aide who was disloyal even to him, to forced labor for life. None were Roumanians.

It may seem strange that at a time when all official relations between Russia and Roumania are broken off, and such incidents as these occur to embitter feelings, meetings of a mixed Russian-Roumanian Boundary Commission have been proceeding peacefully during that same period. While this commission was instituted with a limited scope, that of trying to eliminate troublesome frontier incidents along the Dniester, it has gradually assumed considerable additional importance, as the only joint body of Russians and Roumanians in constant official contact. It was organized at Tiraspol Nov. 20, 1923, and both the Soviets and the Roumanian Government signed the ordinance creating it, which begins: "The delegations of the Alliance of Socialist Republics (S. S. S. R.) on the one hand, and of Roumania on the other, considering that up to the reëstablishment of relations of understanding between those two countries, the best means for preventing and obviating border incidents along the Dniester, would be the sanctioning of a norm on the basis of which, from today on, each incident should be submitted to an immediate investiga-

tion by the competent authorities of each country, etc.” According to the ordinance, the Commission is to handle: 1) firing from one bank at the other, and attacks on sentinels, posts or individuals; 2) unauthorized crossing of the Dniester, and cases of smuggling; 3) questions dealing with restoration of, or compensation for, property forcibly carried off; 4) misunderstandings arising in connection with authorized crossing, or import and export, along the Dniester. The Commission has Russian headquarters in Odessa, Roumanian in Kishineff, and holds an annual meeting in Kamenetz-Podolsk, the latest being that of Nov. 15, 1926, which discussed especially the Dniester fisheries. There are six sub-commissions, holding meetings every few weeks, and located at Hotin—Zvanetz; Atache—Moghileff; Rezina—Râbnitza; Soroca—Iampol; Bender (Tighina)—Tiraspol; and Akkerman (Cetatea Albă)—Ovidiopol. Gen. Iovanovici was the Roumanian head till his promotion to the War Ministry in 1926; he was replaced by Gen. Petrescu. Inspector-General Husărescu, whose book I have so often quoted, is a member of the Commission.

At the first meetings, almost every subject brought up had to be referred back to headquarters; but in 1925 and 1926, it has been possible to settle numerous problems offhand; e. g.,

two Russian bandits, wanted by the authorities, had been captured by the Roumanians in Bessarabia, while a well-known Bessarabian bandit had been taken by Russians in the Moldavian Soviet Republic; it was arranged to extradite these criminals, so that they could be tried by their home authorities. Much study has been devoted to the broader questions of navigation along the Dniester, of exchange of refugees, and of intercourse of travelers between the two countries in general, under strict supervision; and the commissions have given such evidence of cordial and honest effort to improve relations that we may hope to see a sensible decision in all these matters this year or the next.

It is well known in European diplomatic circles that Italy has been working hard for months to bring about a reconciliation between Russia and Roumania. It is hinted that the pact urged by the Italians would provide for a 20-year non-aggression agreement; reciprocal trade and intercourse, including the use of the Dniester by Roumanian craft, and of the Danube by Russian vessels; and the organization, under Italian auspices, of a through railway system from Trieste to Odessa (see p. 234).

Meanwhile, Italy and Roumania signed a treaty in the autumn of 1926, which apparently made

no special mention of Bessarabia—a fact of which the Opposition made much—but which paved the way for further negotiations. In the course of these, Gen. Badoglio, Italian Chief of Staff, visited Bessarabia, and is reported to have expressed pro-Roumanian sentiments at a banquet in Kishineff in November 1926, so strong that Tchitcherin was drawn into a violent anti-Italian interview. Thus Bessarabia enters into the latest cycle of the struggle for the balance of power in Eastern Europe.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE MOLDAVIAN SOVIET REPUBLIC

Frequent mention has been made of the Moldavian Soviet Republic. It is not generally known that the lower Dniester is an almost purely Roumanian stream. The villages along its left bank, from Movilău down to Ovidiopol, opposite Akkerman, are as Moldavian as those on the Bessarabian bank. And this Moldavian peasantry stretches as far east as the Bug, beyond Elisavetgrad, and down to within a few miles of Odessa (see Draghicesco). This is due to a very early immigration of Roumanian shepherds and traders along the streams of the black-earth district east of the Dniester—so early that we find here some Roumanian place-names on the Reichersdorf map of 1541. Further extensive colonization took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Polish princes of Podolia encouraging the creation of large farms by Moldavian boyars; and in the eighteenth century, Russian generals took back with them from their campaigns against the Turks, enormous numbers of Roumanian peasants. In 1739, Gen. Münnich carried back with

him 100,000 Roumanian peasants, according to the memoirs of Trenck, his companion; and in 1792, another great immigration took place. As a result, it is reckoned that there are probably half a million Roumanian peasants in Russia east of the Dniester.

At the beginning, the Soviet government gave these Roumanians no more recognition than had the Imperial régime, under which, in 1897, 92% of the Roumanians in the province of Cherson were reported illiterate, and 95% of those in Podolia. Their hopes were powerfully raised by the Revolution of 1917. A Roumanian officer, attending the service for Roumanian soldiers and refugees in a church in Cherson, noticed some peasants on their knees, with the tears rolling down their cheeks. When he asked them the reason, one replied, in Roumanian: "Why shouldn't we cry, when we see what we never imagined or believed, when we hear church service in the Moldavian tongue?" As we have seen, delegates from across the Dniester came to the various congresses held in Kishineff during 1917; and several young "Transnistrians" attended the courses in Roumanian language and literature given by Roumanian university professors in Kishineff during the summers of 1917 and 1918. In the first days of the independent Ukraine, their

prayers were heeded; two Moldavian representatives were elected to the Ukrainian Rada, and they were promised a large measure of autonomy. But the coup d'état of Skoropadski, in April 1918, threw them both into prison; the Soviet Government took over the Ukraine, and nothing further was heard of these Moldavians till 1923. Russian refugees from Bessarabia organized a Bessarabian Revolutionary Committee, in conjunction with the Krupensky-Schmidt Bessarabian Delegation, and laid before the Soviets the tactical advantage which the creation of a Moldavian Republic opposite Bessarabia, would give them. The Soviets hesitated until after the breakdown of the Russian-Roumanian treaty negotiations in Vienna in the spring of 1924; but on June 26, there was organized in Odessa, in the Department of Education, section of village primary schools (perhaps the most creditable achievement of the Soviet Government), a Moldavian department, charged with the promotion of Moldavian culture in and out of school, by reading-rooms, cultural clubs, libraries and theatrical troupes. Scholarships for young Moldavians were established at Moscow; and a weekly paper "Plugarul Roshu (The Red Ploughman)" began appearing on July 1, 1924. In its seventh number (Aug. 21), it carried an appeal to all educated Moldavians in the



new Republic, to help out the government in its educational work, and announced that the new Moldavian Department of Education had decided on opening preparatory and normal schools, as well as business and agricultural schools, and had begun publishing school-books in Roumanian. These were a First Reader and an Arithmetic; "Who Was Lenin?", "Lenin on Coöperation," "The Question of Small Nationalities in the Soviet Union," "The Land Laws," and "Moldavian Stories of Ion Creanga." It was also announced that "since the Moldavian dialect (i. e., of these peasants in Russia) is very poor in vocabulary, for which reason cultural progress is much hampered, it has been decided that in the Moldavian schools, reading-rooms and educational institutions, the Roumanian language shall be used, with its richer vocabulary." The books for beginners are printed in the Latin letters in use in Roumania; those for educated Moldavians, in the Cyrillic type still usual in Russia.

This admirable program had immediate political results. By late August, "The Red Ploughman" noted that in 21 villages in the district of Odessa, Moldavian had become the only official language, and that judges, teachers, priests and town officials had been obliged to begin studying Moldavian, if they did not know it. Meetings de-

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manding a political constitution were held during the summer; and early in September 1924, President Tchubar (Ciubar) of the Kharkoff Council of Commissioners of the People was able to state that the Moldavian Republic, with a population of between 300 and 400,000, would shortly be established. On Oct. 8, 1924, the Council authorized the creation, "within the bosom of the Soviet Socialist Ukrainian Republic, of an Autonomous Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, whose boundaries shall be: on the northwest, the boundary-line of the village land of Grushky and Ocnitza, in Velico-Koshnitza, county of Tultchin, province of Podolia; then along the boundary of the sector of Kamenca, county of Tultchin, province of Podolia, leaving to one side the village of Bolgan and the market-town of Zagnidkoff, continuing through the villages of Pisarevca and Petrovca, sector of Crut, county of Balta, province of Odessa, then passing through the station of Borshti and the villages of Ghiderim, Poshitzel and Ossipova. On the east, along the eastern boundary of the village of Mikhalovca, through the town of Ananieff, Valea-Gutzului, Antonovca, Elenovca, Novo-Alexandrovca, Sloboda Ploscoe, Gradinitza, the town of Tiraspol, Hutori Slobozia, then along the lake of Cuciurgan past Ploscoe to the village of Troitzca. Along the south and

southwest, the boundary is that of the Federation of Soviet Socialist Republics." Since these territories included many Ukrainians and Russians, those two languages were made state languages along with Moldavian; and the large majority of the governing council have been non-Roumanians. The first president was Gregory Ivanievitch Borissoff (called Starâi-Moshneagul), a former worker in the Bender railway shops, and an avowed Communist since 1901. His chief assistant was the Bulgarian lawyer, A. I. Stroyeff; the only Moldavians on the central committee were Buciushcan, former member of the Bessarabian Diet, and Miss Caterina Arbore, daughter of the well-known Bessarabian author Zamfir Arbore, and a leading Communist worker, expelled from Roumania in 1924. The first session of the Central Committee was held at Birzula on Nov. 9, 1924. Pres. Starâi (Borissoff), speaking in Roumanian, closed with a reminder that they would not forget their brethren "who are groaning under the yoke of the boyars," and offered a final toast to the "Autonomous Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (R. A. S. S. M.), cradle of Soviet Roumania." Naturally, the Soviet authorities counted largely upon the disturbing influence on Bessarabia of this independent Roumanian republic just over the Dniester; they hold out the

hope to discontented Bessarabians that they may enter it; and at the same time they are pleased to diminish somewhat the importance of the Ukraine, which has not always been a satisfactory member of the Soviet family. Nor were the Roumanians displeased to see the Russians emphasize the pre-vaillingly Roumanian character of this region across the Dniester, seeing that the Russians had denied that Bessarabia could be considered Roumanian, but now admit it *à fortiori*.

The new Republic has not had smooth sailing. Business has been dead on that side of the Dniester also, and the drought of the last few years has affected it as severely as Bessarabia. That was the upshot of my repeated inquiries, when I was on the Dniester in the spring of 1925, and I find it continually confirmed. Indeed, I read of a memorial presented to the executive of the Ukrainian Soviet in March 1926, stating that nine-tenths of the peasants in the Moldavian Republic were seriously affected by the results of the drought, that infant mortality had reached 70%, and that supplies of grain and money were urgently needed—a similar situation to that in Bessarabia, which later however was being alleviated by the urgent relief measures (see p. 7) taken by the Roumanian Government, which distributed many thousand carloads of grain in Bessarabia. This was

sold to the peasants at a low price, and the local banks and coöperatives were assigned large sums (over 500,000,000 lei) from Bucharest to be loaned to the peasants. Apparently Moscow and Odessa have not been as generous with the Moldavian Soviet Republic.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE PRESENT ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CONDITION OF BESSARABIA

We have seen that Bessarabia is an almost purely agricultural region, with only a rudimentary industrial and commercial development; that when the Roumanians took it over from the Russians, they found it almost without means of communication, and with an uneducated and backward peasantry. Since then, they have had to struggle with several years of drought, particularly acute in 1924 and 1925, and with a complete dislocation of Bessarabia's ordinary markets; it was hoped that Poland would take the place of Russia as chief buyer of Bessarabian fruits and wines, but Poland (until recently) clapped high duties on them, as reprisal for the Roumanian high duty on Polish coal. Smuggling is of course a great evil; two million smuggled cigarettes and over seven tons of tobacco were seized in the first half of 1926. Money has been scarce and very dear, as everywhere in central and eastern Europe, and more so than in any other province of Roumania; it is calculated that while about 100,000,000 rubles were on loan in 1914—\$50,-

000,000—today loans amount to only about a billion and a half of lei (\$8,000,000); the rate of expropriation of the great estates was lower, under 700 lei a hectare, whereas the average in the Old Kingdom was 2000 lei; and during the period of exchange of rubles for lei (at a very favorable rate, as with crowns in Transylvania), the peasants had little confidence in the new régime, and at least a billion rubles is believed to have been kept back, and thus completely lost. The government's export duties on grain, now happily greatly reduced, interfered with the sale of what little wheat was available. Taxes, rents and prices of prime necessities kept going up; the government finally had to postpone collection of the burdensome commercial taxes, as the merchants found collections very bad. Add to this the progressive depreciation of the currency, the constant Soviet interference, the exactions of speculators lending to the peasants on their crops, and the intensity and bitterness of local politics, and the wonder is that Bessarabia has remained so loyal; there was not a single Roumanian among those found guilty in the Tatar-Bunar trial. The 1925 statistics showed a falling off in the planting of winter grain—561,967 hectares, as compared with 650,432 in the autumn of 1925; 471,923 hectares were in wheat, 78,749 in



rye, 9828 in barley, and 2825 in rape-seed; but the winter of 1925-6 was excellent, with abundant snow; the spring planting of corn and wheat brought an abundant harvest, unfortunately partly ruined by a very rainy autumn (see p. 11).

I have failed to mention a feature of the Bessarabian situation which may seem insignificant, but which recently roused more feeling, perhaps, than any other act of the Roumanian government; I refer to the attempt to do away with the Old Style calendar. The Orthodox Church held to the Julian Calendar until the war; and observation of what is now going on in Bessarabia will help the student to visualize the struggles of 175 years ago in England and the American Colonies, when the Gregorian Calendar was being introduced with us. In Roumania itself, and in Soviet (and irreligious) Russia, the Gregorian Calendar is now in effect;<sup>1</sup> but the Orthodox Bessarabian peasant has no sympathy with such newfangled notions, and is shocked at the idea of changing the date of Easter and other church feasts. Devout religious observance is still a general Bessarabian characteristic. A recent Roumanian Finance Minister told me this anecdote. He had brought in a bill laying a uniform inheritance tax through the kingdom; a group of eight Bessarabian Sena-

<sup>1</sup> It was adopted by the Ukraine in December 1926.

tors at once called on him, to protest. Such an iniquitous tax had never been laid by Russia, they said; and one of them, in his excitement, called down the curses of the widows and orphans of Bessarabia upon the unhappy Minister. He explained to them that the tax is practically universal, was already being levied along four different lines in various parts of Roumania, and seemed low to the Transylvanians, who had had to pay a higher tax under the Hungarians; and that it fell very lightly on close relatives. The Senators were finally won over, and penitently informed the Minister that they would go to church after the session and each light a candle, to counteract the curse they had invoked against him!

At the meeting of the Orthodox Church Synod in Bucharest in December 1925, Archbishop Gurie, head of the Bessarabian clergy, outlined the efforts made, through pastoral letters, addresses by the priests to their congregations, canonical epistles, sermons, etc., to induce the faithful to adopt the New Style—efforts almost wholly without result. The Synod voted to have the reformed calendar applied to Bessarabia; but in an address to the Ministry of Public Instruction, asking that they call upon all school authorities in Bessarabia to help enlighten the people on the

subject, the Synod notes that this matter "has taken the aspect of a politico-social question, in consequence of the intromission and propaganda of various agencies hostile to the unity of the Roumanian people, or of unscrupulous politicians." It is no secret that the former Russian Archbishop of Bessarabia, Anastasius, is conducting this campaign from his headquarters in Jerusalem, with the aid of various anti-Roumanian elements.

On Feb. 4, 1926, at the meeting of the National Church Congress, a memorial was read in the name of the delegates of the archbishopric of Kishineff, the bishopric of Ismaïl and that of Baltz, recalling their request to have a gradual introduction of the new calendar, in view of the strong conservative feeling of the members of the Bessarabian Orthodox Church—a request the Synod did not see fit to grant. The news of the approaching change in the date of Easter, they continue, has been such a serious blow that they beg that for one more year the old system continue. In fact, the matter went still further. It was established that certain priests encouraged their parishioners to continue observing Old Style; and in April 1926, before the fall of the Liberals, several of these priests were arrested and brought before the military courts. Judging

by the experience of our ancestors—it took Scotland 50 years to follow England's example in adopting New Style—this will be a live question in Bessarabia for some time to come. The new Averescu Ministry, in April 1926, allowed everyone to celebrate Easter as he pleased, Old Style or New Style, pending an Ecumenical Council, to be held later in the year; the chief beneficiaries were the school-children, who had two sets of Easter holidays. Orders were again issued (in October 1926) for a uniform observance of New Style in Bessarabia in 1927.

Another unexpected difficulty the Roumanians had in the Bessarabian cities arose from their effort to introduce a new law providing rest-hours for employees, uniform all over the kingdom. This provided that stores should open at 8, and close from 12 to 1. A storm of protest burst forth all over Bessarabia. In Russia, they keep late hours, like the Spaniards; it is not customary for stores to open before 9 in Kishineff, and the best shopping hours are from 12 to 3, the dinner hour coming from 3:30 to 5; then the stores are open again in the evening.

The Bessarabian Church has had other troubles since the Union. The Church still possessed valuable properties in Bessarabia; and in fear of possible secularization, it transferred these proper-



THE KISHINEFF CATHEDRAL

ties to a private corporation, the Union of the Orthodox Clergy of Bessarabia. But the new Roumanian Constitution grants the Church complete autonomy; and under pressure from the government, the Church has finally resumed ownership and responsibility, after a controversy which lasted several years.

The Church, like any other land-owner, had had its excess holdings expropriated. The Agrarian Law passed by the Provincial Diet aimed at giving every family a minimum of 6 hectares (15 acres); but the average worked out much less. According to the recent brochure of Dr. Agricola Cardash, Director General in the Ministry of Agriculture, "Aspects of the Bessarabian Agrarian Reform" (1926), some 4480 estates were expropriated, with an area of 1,844,539 hectares; of this, 1,098,045 hectares have been taken up by 357,016 farmers, living in 1739 villages. The average is therefore 3 hectares ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  acres). At the end of 1926, the total area is announced as 1,491,020 hectares; the average still remains low. That is considered too small, and of course has been pitifully inadequate during the drought conditions of the past few years; there has been much emigration, especially to Brazil; but the industrialization of the country, which will now soon take place, will provide a remedy. Rou-

mania stands where Italy was forty or fifty years ago, on the verge of an intense industrial development; she has an abundance of raw materials and willing and faithful labor; now that she has regulated her American debt, she may expect foreign aid. Bessarabia will profit with the other provinces.

It is a pleasure to turn from this rather gloomy picture of economic and financial conditions, to the enormous improvement in the schools since the annexation. We have seen how widespread was illiteracy under the Imperial Russian régime, especially among the Roumanians, for whom, when the war broke out, there was not a single school in Bessarabia, although they formed the majority of the population. The teachers in the Bessarabian schools, mainly Russians, were supposed to have had a four-year normal school course; many, however, were graduates of the intermediate schools (between primary and lycée), who had taken pedagogical courses for two or three years. When the Roumanians took over the province, many of these teachers went back to their homes in Russia; but the Roumanians, who were short of teachers even in the Old Kingdom and Transylvania, at once employed all that were available, assigning them the salary due them according to service, just as in Roumania. They

even took in teachers without full preparation, from church, village and private schools, nor did they insist on their taking the oath; many did not know Roumanian; and it was years before they were required to pass an examination in elementary Roumanian, just as in Transylvania. The first school census, of 1920-21, showed a total of 1747 schools, of which 1233 were Roumanian, 200 Ukrainian, 120 Russian, 78 Bulgarian, 73 German, 38 Jewish, 3 Polish; of the 2746 teachers, 854 belonged to the minority races. The number of children between 7 and 13 was 398,695, of whom 136,172 (34.2%) were in school. By 1923-24, the number of schools had increased to 2041, with 3927 teachers; and 203,627 children, out of a total of 441,958 (46%) were in school. The Roumanians show the same easy-going tolerance of minority languages in Bessarabia (see Russian testimony on p. 219 that has surprised me so many times in Transylvania, where there are actually today more Hungarian public schools, under the Roumanians, than there were when the country was under the Crown of St. Stephen. Indeed, on Nov. 12, 1926, the City Council of Satu Mare (Szatmar) voted to return to Hungarian for its deliberations! In 1925, I bought in a Kishineff bookstore copies of a Russian geography and a Russian reader in use in the Russian schools



maintained by the Roumanians; and I find in the Bucharest newspapers of 1926 repeated complaints that Russian is still used in church services in Bessarabia, even in Kishineff itself.

In Larga, e. g., a town of 5000 Roumanians near Lipcani (Hotin), formal complaint was made in August 1926 that the local priest still uses only Russian, though his flock do not understand it; and the special correspondent of the Bucharest *Universul*, in that same month, notes that at Tighina (Bender) neither his station porter nor the coachman nor a policeman of whom he asked his way, spoke Roumanian. Every traveler in Transylvania notices the same patience; indeed, the opposition charges that over 3000 Roumanian government employees in Transylvania (former Hungarians) not merely do not yet understand Roumanian, but have not even taken the oath of allegiance. Russian telegrams are accepted for transmission, if written in Latin letters; and in February 1926, it was officially decided by the Roumanian Court of Appeals that commercial documents in Russian were perfectly legal. Of the other nationalities, the Germans and the Bulgarians are especially loyal to the new régime.

Side by side with the schools are functioning other educational agencies. Everywhere one

finds "cultural clubs"; in the village of Volontirovca, I was shown the local headquarters, with its little library and museum; and in the larger towns more pretentious organizations—Free Universities or Popular Universities (i. e., University Extension), "Case Culturale" (Culture Clubs), and the like. In Soroca, e. g., the "Popular Atheneum" gives a musical or educational program every Sunday, and a public library has been opened, as in numerous other towns. A similar "Atheneum" and library are in operation in Orhei. Much aid is extended by the educational societies of the other provinces, and the government encourages excursions of professors and students from the Old Kingdom and Transylvania into Bessarabia. In April 1926, e. g., representatives of the student organization of Bucharest, "Curentul Studentzesc la Sate" (Student Movement in the Villages), under Prof. Shtefănescu of the University of Cluj (Klausenburg), visited the town of Comrat, a center with 17,000 people, largely Bulgarian, about 50 miles from Kishineff, and were entertained by the local students; some years ago, this organization had established two public libraries in Comrat; up to date it has established in Roumania 724 such libraries, with 146,745 volumes. It is affecting to see the devotion and enthusiasm with which such

work is being carried on in Bessarabia—work that makes one hope that the Cultural Loan Roumania has been trying to get from the League of Nations, may be granted; and if, in the midst of economic and financial distress and political disgust, Bessarabia is nevertheless loyal to Roumania, the reason is to be found primarily in the delight of the Bessarabian peasant at these new educational facilities for himself and his children.

Perhaps nothing can illustrate the change in Bessarabia more strikingly than the will of Basil (Vasile) Stroescu, the Moldavian patriot, President of the Bessarabian Diet, who died in the spring of 1926. This will, a holographic document in Russian, with the signatures of two Russian witnesses, was dated in Paris in March 1918. It begins: "In the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen. I, the noble, Vasile Vasilievitch Stroescu, of the Province of Bessarabia, born, etc., being of sound mind and memory unimpaired, have thought best to make the following disposal, etc." He then enumerates his various properties, in Trînca, Bădragi, Zabriceni, Drutza, Stângăcenii and still others, in the counties of Hotin and Baltz, with a total area of about 8000 hectares (20,000 acres)—all now expropriated, of course, except for a few hundred acres. Then comes the list of his bank accounts, the chief

being some 850,000 French francs in a Paris bank, and 150,000 rubles in Odessa—the latter, of course, completely blotted out, and the former only a shadow of its earlier value. All this property Stroescu left to the Provincial Zemstvo of Bessarabia (now non-existent) for the establishment of village schools with obligatory instruction in Roumanian (now provided by the state). In case the Zemstvo could not do this, all his property was to go to the Roumanian State; I have mentioned his earlier generosity to this cause of Roumanian schools in Transylvania. Furthermore, either the Zemstvo or the Roumanian State was to pay certain annuities from these funds to his sister and certain dependents; and the executor, Ioan G. Pelivan, was to provide from the Russian funds for two churches, in the villages of Trînca and Zabriceni.

Such a document, only ten years old, bridges an abyss. It breathes the comfortable old Russian patriarchal atmosphere, of a land-holding aristocracy, of higher rights and privileges than the rest of mankind. Its execution falls within a period of militant equalization, as radical and almost as uncomfortable as the French Revolution. Nature chose to make this period particularly hard for Bessarabia; nor has man's perversity and incompetency failed to complicate matters.

As is remarked by the veteran observer Stephen Graham (p. 175), in 1924: “It may frankly be said that England herself could not govern a place like Bessarabia.” Yet Stroescu lived to see triumphant the principle for which he had fought all his life—schools for the people, in Bessarabia and Transylvania, in their own language—and that is Bessarabia’s chief hope for the future.

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## INDEX

This Index has been made unusually full, in the hope of being useful to those who follow current political and economic news from Bessarabia, Roumania and the Ukraine. It should be borne in mind that the spelling of Bessarabian and Russian proper names varies, especially as between C and K; CH, TCH, KH and H; E and YE; F, PH and TH; I, J and Y; S and Z; SH and CH; TS and TZ; V and W. Of abbreviations used, B = Bessarabia (n); Roum. = Roumania (n); Russ. = Russia (n); Turk. = Turkish. The Index is also a modest glossary of unusual terms employed in the text.

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